A School History of Oxfordshire

By H. A. Liddell

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OXFORDSHIRE

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SCHOOL HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE

BY H. A. LIDDELL, M.A.

WITH SEVENTY ILLUSTRATIONS

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1908

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HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to present in a readable manner the leading incidents in the history of the county, so far as they are illustrated by the monuments of the past which are to be found within its borders, and by the places which have been the scene of important events.

In all subjects of study the value of 'the concrete' to beginners is now fully appreciated, and with the broadening of our educational views, there comes the further advantage which a progressive age supplies in ever-increasing facilities for travel. The child's horizon need no longer be bounded by the limits of his own parish or town: he can see for himself places of historical interest not only near at hand, but with little difficulty can carry his investigations further afield.

Nothing appeals more to the imagination of an intelligent boy or girl than a visit, under competent guidance, to places actually associated with the great men and deeds of the past. Thus it is that prehistoric remains, famous churches and mansions, historical monuments and sites of battlefields may be utilized to create a vivid interest in the events with which they are connected, and to cultivate the habit of accurate observation and intelligent judgement.

To get a child to realize that the story of his own village, town, or county has some relation to the history of the country as a whole, is not only to increase his regard for his native place, but also to provide him with a stimulus for further investigation into the forces which

have secured the nation's progress or the empire's greatness.

There are few counties so rich in historical associations as Oxfordshire, and the presence near at hand of many concrete illustrations of notable events should help to make the study of history a matter of real, living interest. How valuable an asset such associations are in developing the intelligence of the children, many teachers have proved by experience : to them it is hoped that this book will be welcome as a supplement to their efforts, and as a means of enlarging the field of interest which they have already created.

Whatever success may be achieved by its publication will be due in no small measure to the kind assistance which the author has received on many sides during the course of preparation. To the President of Trinity College, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, Mr. Adolphus Ballard, Mr. G. S. Gordon, and Mr. C. E. Doble, all of whom have contributed valuable suggestions, he would particularly express his grateful acknowledgement of their invaluable help.

Permission to use illustrations has been kindly granted by Mr. W. H. Taunt, Mr. F. R. Packer, and Mr. Pankhurst, all of whom have supplied views of various places in the county. Mr. Falconer Madan and Mr. J. Parker have been good enough to allow the use of plans from Parker's *Early History of Oxford*; while Mr. T. W. Jackson, the Keeper of the Hope Collection, has generously placed at the author's disposal a valuable selection of engravings. Last, but not least, must be recognized the kindness of Mr. E. A. Greening Lamborn, who, at considerable inconvenience to himself, took excellent photographs of some views which would not otherwise have been available.

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CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC OXFORDSHIRE

I. Physical Features

The story of one's own land and people, and more particularly of that immediate district with which we have been familiar from childhood, must always have an interest and charm which the history of foreign lands cannot supply. Let us, then, try to find out what part our own Oxfordshire has played in helping to build up the mother-country which we love so well.

To tell the story of our own county properly, we must begin at the beginning; but where is the beginning? Is it, as we are taught in our history books, when Julius Caesar first landed in Britain B.C. 55? Scarcely so, for when that great general came, there were people here whose ancestors had been occupying the land for hundreds of years. Now how are we to know anything about a people who left no records behind them, and about whom very little was ever written except what you will perhaps read in the stories of old Roman authors? Is it altogether impossible to recall these dim, forgotten days of the past, with scarcely a word to tell us who the men and women were, and what they did? It does seem difficult; but yet, although the books are wanting, there are records which are not altogether unintelligible to the seeing eye and the inquiring mind, records on many sides to be seen and interpreted.

But before we turn our attention to the people, let us try to picture to ourselves what kind of a countryside it was in which our ancestors had to dwell.

Look carefully at the map which forms the frontispiece, and you will see that the area of the present county has at least three well-marked natural boundaries, the Chiltern Hills on the south-east, the high land running along the

western border from Edgehill in the north, and, along its southern side, the flowing stream of old Father Thames himself. Now within this wide and shallow valley are many streams, so many that Oxfordshire is certainly one of the best-watered counties in the whole of England. There is the Cherwell running right away from the north till it reaches the parent stream itself where Oxford now stands; west of it the Evenlode, and the Windrush with its winding course; east of it, the Thame stealing down from its home in the Chiltern Hills, and many smaller streams besides on whose pleasant banks boys and girls of past and present ages have often played.

In the days of its earliest inhabitants the whole county was covered with dense forest except where the rank meadows were found along the river valleys, and on the exposed uplands, where the trees could find little foothold; except, too, where the Otmoor Marsh spread out its spongy soil along the river Ray.

Now the records of which we shall tell later show us that these primitive folk obtained their livelihood mainly by growing patches of corn and pasturing cattle and sheep; and this they could not do in the tangled undergrowth of the great forests. Their tools were of the roughest character, not made of tempered steel with keen edge, but chipped out of flint and stone with much labour. With such implements as these, it was quite impossible to bring down the trees of the forest, and to hew up and clear away the fallen trunks. They were compelled, then, to live where Nature herself had made clearings for them on the sloping downs and by the banks of the running streams. But the latter were by no means ideal spots for houses, unless they were high enough to be secure from floods.

In these days the streams flow gently between well-kept banks, glorious for boating and bathing in the summer, and splendid for skating in the winter when the frost has them in its keen grip. Then, there was no Thames Conservancy to regulate the wanderings of the streams, to construct locks and weirs, to keep the water from running to waste in the long dry summer months, and to control the flow of its turbid current when the winter floods poured

forth. Experience has taught us that where the trees are thick the air is humid and moist, and rain falls more abundantly than in the treeless wastes.

The gentle streams of to-day were then in winter-time rushing torrents, with their waters swollen by rivulets long since dried up, whose course can still be seen marked out by lines of willows. These carried their waters to the Thames, a much larger stream then than now, whose waters in flood time burst its uncertain banks and spread far and wide over the countryside, forming a barrier altogether impassable to those who did not know its shallow places.

II. Relics of the Past

Along the heights of the swelling downs in the west ran an old British trackway, for here, free from the under-

Asthall Barrow

growth of the lowlands, it was possible to move along with unimpeded step. Here and there scattered along the line may be seen even now curious mounds, sometimes dome-shaped, sometimes long, sometimes small, and sometimes large, but never large enough to lead us to think that they are part of the hills themselves.

Nor, indeed, are they, for on examination they prove to be without doubt the work of man's hand. At the bottom of some of them have been found hollow places, roughly covered in with unhewn slabs of stone, which on close examination are found to protect all that remains of some departed hero of these far off days. Laid there in the garments that he daily wore, the lighter parts have long since crumbled away to dust, leaving only the skeleton behind, and often not even that.

In our day, we show affection for departed friends by placing flowers upon the grave; then, they buried with them their weapons, sometimes adding such gifts of value as they themselves possessed.

Not only is it in these barrows that imperishable remains are to be found, but here and there in the county the sites of their settlements and camps have been unearthed. A little to the south of Stanton Harcourt is the village of Standlake, and near by, in 1857, the remains of a complete village were brought to light.

The most important articles found during the excavations have been placed in a separate case in the Ashmolean Museum, and it is hoped that every boy and girl who reads this book will take the first opportunity of seeing them for themselves. Otherwise, the relics of these ages preserved in the Museum are arranged in cases according to their antiquity. First, there are the Palaeolithic specimens, stone weapons and implements, rough and uncouth in form; then the Neolithic, showing the same articles much more skilfully made, more varied in form, and often polished. Then, when men had learned how to work the softer metals, comes the Bronze Age, with tools and weapons made of bronze; and, last of all, when the secret of the useful but refractory iron had been discovered, there follows the Iron Age. And what are these relics? There are beautifully shaped stone hammer heads, drilled with a hole in the centre for the handle, and equally beautiful axe heads; stone sinkers for their nets, for they were fishermen; sharp knives and daggers made out of flat pieces of flint; pins and needles of bone; and, perhaps,

most interesting of all, the carefully shaped flint arrow heads with which they tipped their shafts.

In addition to these there are samples of their pottery ware, cups and platters, and, in the Standlake collection, some jars standing twelve or fifteen inches in height. Now evidence goes to show that in the Stone Age the dead were buried, sometimes in the extended and sometimes in the sitting position; but in the Bronze Age it is equally clear that cremation had been introduced, and that these jars or urns were used to contain the ashes and charred bones which were subsequently committed to the grave.

III. Druidical Remains

But to return to the story of the stones. The most striking of all the British remains in the county are undoubtedly the famous Rollright Stones.

Every schoolboy has heard of Stonehenge, but here in our own county is a monument of the past in all probability more ancient than Stonehenge itself. Some three miles to the north-west of Chipping Norton is situated the hamlet of Little Rollright, and on the ridge of the hills just beyond, the circle of the Rollright Stones. Rough and unhewn, weatherworn and moss-covered, they present a strangely weird appearance, and though in point of size and finish far inferior to those of Stonehenge, they are yet none the less interesting. The stones of Stonehenge are not only larger but have obviously been squared with tools, while huge transverse blocks have been placed from top to top of the standing ones. The irregular shape of the Rollright Stones and the absence of the transverse blocks seem to indicate for them a much greater antiquity. In several points, however, there is a striking resemblance; in both the enclosed areas are circular in shape, and both agree in having the same diameter of 35 yards. Standing apart from the circle and north-east in each case is a solitary stone, that at Rollright being called the King Stone, over which an observer, in the centre of the circle, may see the sun rise on Midsummer day. This fact to some extent supports the theory that such circular monu-

The Rollright Stones

ments were used by the early Britons as sacred enclosures for public worship.

And here it is interesting to note the strange traditional story which has grown up about these relics of the past. In addition to the solitary King Stone already mentioned, a group of three other stones stands due east of the circle, and 390 yards distant from the centre. These are known by the name of the Whispering Knights, and the story goes that a certain king, long ages ago, had landed where Dover now stands with the intention of conquering all

THE KING STONE

England. He is said to have consulted a witch as to the possibility of success, and received for answer,

> "When Long Compton you shall see,
> King of England you shall be."

Inquiries led him to Rollright, and there, slightly ahead of his forces, he advanced to the crest of the hill, from which the village of Long Compton can be seen nestling in

the hollow below. Before he could reach the ridge, however, the witch suddenly appeared before him and declared,

> "Seven long strides if thou canst take,
> Take them boldly and win free,
> If Long Compton thou canst make,
> King of England thou shalt be."

Assured of success he replied exultingly

> "Stand aside; by stick, stock, stone,
> As King of England I shall be known!"

But he had reckoned without his host. Instead of attaining the brow of the hill he beheld a long mound of earth rise up in front of him, and before the seven strides were complete the witch sang out,

> "Long Compton thou wilt never see,
> King of England thou shalt not be,
> Rise up stick and stand still stone,
> For King of England thou shalt be none:
> Thou and thy men hoarstones shall be
> And I myself an eldern tree."

And thereupon, the king on the side of the mound, his army in a circle behind him, and the three knights who had loitered behind with their heads together plotting treason, were all transformed to stone. Of the other stories that linger about these time-worn stones there is no room to tell. There they stand now within a railed enclosure, which the Commissioners of H.M.'s Woods and Public Buildings have put there for their preservation. Another relic of the past somewhat similar in character is to be found near to Stanton Harcourt. Three large stones in a field near the church, called by local tradition the Devil's Coits or Quoits, are said to have been hurled from the neighbouring Cumnor Hurst, in a match which the arch-fiend played with man for his soul, and which he won. In all probability they are monuments to commemorate one of the many conflicts which took place between the Britons and the all-conquering Saxons.

Another Druidical remain is to be found at Enstone, where is a ruined Cromlech, popularly known as the

"Hoarstone". The group really consists of five stones, of which the Hoarstone is the most conspicuous, standing as it does some nine and a half feet high. The disposition of the remaining stones seems to indicate that in their original positions the group consisted of two uprights supporting a large slab on the top with one end closed in by the fourth stone, and that when the group was disturbed one of the uprights was broken in two by the fall.

IV. British Camps

References to the earliest inhabitants of this district are very scanty. Such as exist tell us that before the time of Caesar the neighbourhood was inhabited by a tribe called the Dobūni, whose territory extended from the Chilterns to the Severn and from the Avon to the Thames. To the east of them were the Catuvelauni; on the south were the Atrebates, against whose inroads they had often to defend themselves. For this purpose it was the custom to protect their borders with camps at all points which gave easy access to the invader; not camps such as we know them, but enclosures protected by a mound and ditch. One of the most striking examples of these camps lies not within the present border of the county, but over the river, opposite to where Dorchester now stands. Rising up steeply from the river meadows, are to be seen two singular round hills, known as Wittenham Clumps.

On the higher of these two summits, which has an elevation of 250 feet, is a fine British earthwork, consisting of a triple line of entrenchment with a ditch all the way round. On the Oxfordshire side, stretching across a U-shaped bend in the river, is a double mound with a trench in the middle. These mounds are known locally as the Dyke Hills, and, standing as they do, opposite to the camp on the hill, their situation is remarkable. Who built them it is difficult to say; but it is not at all unlikely that, while the camp on the hill was an outpost of the Atrebates, the fortifications on the plain were thrown up by the Dobūni to oppose any advance made by their neighbours.

So, also, at other vulnerable points are found the remains of ancient earthworks; along or near the old trackway on the west at Madmarston, Tadmarton, Ilbury, Nadbury, Rollright, Lyneham to Asthall, and along the southern frontier at Dorchester, Eynsham, and Standlake to Asthall again. And now just a word as to the old British trackways. The Britons had yet to learn the art of road-making from their Roman conquerors. Such

Wittenham Clumps

tracks as they had were generally run along the ridges of elevated land, and rarely through the virgin forest. One of the chief of these, known as the Icknield Way, ran right across the country, from Icklingham in Suffolk possibly to Bath. It entered the county at Chinnor, dividing into the upper and lower way, the former generally keeping the line of the heights while the latter pursued a parallel course at the foot of the western slope, and ultimately crossed the river at Streatley. A similar trackway is to be found along the western heights of the county, but in this case its interest is merely local and there is no record of any particular name given to it.

Such, then, in all probability was the character of the country in which the earliest inhabitants lived their lives, not perhaps in such an uncivilised manner as we are sometimes tempted to believe, but raising their scanty crops, herding their cattle, and finding out for themselves the value of the mineral wealth buried in the soil. At any rate, during the century preceding Caesar's visit, they were not woad-stained savages living in holes and caves, but intelligent folk gaining their livelihood by agriculture and cattle farming rather than by hunting ; building houses of wattle-work, and showing no small skill in manufacturing weapons, implements, and ornaments from such metals as they could find.

CHAPTER II

OXFORDSHIRE UNDER THE ROMANS

I. The March of the Conqueror

The story of the Roman occupation of Britain is mainly the story of what a powerful and victorious nation did for the people which they conquered. Those who realize how great to-day are the responsibilities of our own empire to the various nations that come under its sway, will be able to understand, in some measure, the benefits which the early Britons received from their Roman masters. For, taken on the whole, the four hundred years of strong and methodical government during which Britain was part of the Roman Empire were years of prosperity and progress.

Those of you who have read the fourth and fifth books of Caesar's *Gallic War* will know very well what part that great general played in the first foreign invasion of our land. Of what he did we have little to say here, since on neither occasion did he come near our own county; but it will be interesting to observe the indirect influence which he brought to bear on its inhabitants. Moved partly by the desire to punish the Britons for the help they had rendered to their kinsmen beyond the sea, and partly by the desire to find fresh fields of conquest, he brought an expedition across the Channel in the year 55 B.C. The lateness of the season, however, compelled him to return after a stay of only three weeks, but in the next year he succeeded in carrying out arrangements for a much more elaborate campaign. We are told that he landed in Kent and marched towards the Thames, crossing the river probably in the neighbourhood of London, and advancing still further

north to attack the Catuvelauni. The Catuvelauni, you will remember, were the eastern neighbours of our own Dobūni, the Chiltern Hills probably forming the boundary line between the two tribes. Verulamium (St. Albans), the stronghold of Cassivelaunus, was captured, a tribute imposed, hostages taken, and then the Roman general returned home once more. The chief result of this campaign was to check the power of the Catuvelauni, who were bidding fair to become masters of the whole of southern Britain; a temporary check only, for they gradually recovered their former influence. Although no attempt to rule the country was made for a hundred years, yet the success of Caesar in crossing the Channel gave encouragement to others to do the same, and Roman influence made itself felt in many ways.

In A.D. 43, the subjugation of Britain began in grim earnest. Claudius was emperor at Rome, and by him a famous senator named Aulus Plautius was selected to lead the Roman legions into Britain. At that time Caractacus was the dominant chief, and it is said that a younger brother, Bericus by name, who had been expelled from the country for sedition, sought the protection of Claudius and induced him to send the expedition. Aulus Plautius landed on the coast with the considerable force of four legions, numbering with their auxiliaries probably about 50,000 men. Of what he did we should have little to say were it not for the fact that in his first campaign he brought the Dobūni and Oxfordshire under the rule of Rome. It is no easy matter to form an intelligible idea of the course of his march from the very meagre records which are left, but of the many attempts made to reconcile the various statements the most plausible is probably this.

Leaving Kent, where he had landed, he advanced northwest along the borders of the forest of Anderida, and coming up with the British forces under Caractacus and Togodumnus, joint kings of the Catuvelaunians, he defeated them. Thence he passed on to Silchester (Calleva), the capital of the Atrebates, situated some

eight miles south of Reading, and captured the town. Still pursuing his north-westerly march he reached Cirencester (Corinium), the capital of the Dobūni, and made himself master of the town. Here he received the submission of the tribe, and formed a permanent camp which developed later into the great Roman town of Corinium. It was now time to turn back, and it is most probable that he retraced his steps by the Icknield Way which ran along the Berkshire downs. This would bring him very near to the Thames and to a critical point in his campaign. He found his way barred by a river, probably the Thames, where the Icknield Way crossed it near Wallingford. Now the barbarians thought this to be impassable by the Romans so long as they themselves held the fords, and so lay careless and secure in their camp on the other side. But they had reckoned without the training of the Roman legions, for the German contingent, skilled in swimming rapid streams under arms, were soon across the river and in their midst. Contenting themselves with wounding the chariot horses they threw the Britons into confusion, giving opportunity for fresh detachments of the Roman army to cross the river. The next day the battle was renewed, and after a long and doubtful struggle, victory in the end fell to the Romans, mainly through the heroism of Caius Sidius Geta, one of Plautius's generals. Having put the enemy to flight, the Roman leader would naturally follow the old trackway as it skirts the Chiltern Hills, and continue his march eastward till he reached the spot where London now stands. Here we must leave him and his further conquests, merely noting by the way that the Oxfordshire victory taught the Dobūni to respect once and for all the prowess of the Roman arms.

II. Roads and Camps

From that time onward the Dobūni settled down to enjoy the peace and protection which the conquerors brought, and we must look for the record of their story in the remains which their masters left behind, rather

FOSSE WAY
Edsc Hill
Tumuli
Madmarston
Tadmarton
Wiggington
WATLING STREET
BRITISH TRACKWAY
Rollright Stones
Ilbury
R Cherwell
Tumulus
Enstone
Lyneham
RAGNUM
Stonesfield
AKEMAN STREET
Barrow
Bicester
Ambrosden
N. Leigh
Asthall
Barrow
R Windrush
Eynsham
ROMAN ROAD
Wheatley
Standlake
Stanton Harcourt
Barrow
R Thames
Dorchester
Wittenham
ICKNIELD WAY
CHILTERN HILLS
R Thames
MAP SHEWING
BRITISH & ROMAN
POSITIONS
L.G.W.

than in the history of military achievements. These remains consist, in the first place, of the roads which they built to provide an easy and rapid passage over a country badly drained, and generally covered with forest. Then there are the sites of their villas, or private houses, and of the camps with which they fortified important military positions. And, lastly, in the places where their houses and towns have stood, we must search through the accumulations of centuries to see what they left behind them in the way of pottery, weapons, utensils, and coins.

And first as to the roads. The Romans could build roads to perfection, so well indeed, that after the lapse of all these centuries there is little difficulty in finding out where they ran. As a rule their course went straight as a line from point to point, ignoring all difficulties of gradient, and crossing hill, valley, and stream, in the directest line possible. Hard and well drained, they formed a striking contrast to the trackways which had answered the purpose of the light travelling Britons.

A glance at the map on the previous page will show how Oxfordshire fared with respect to these highways. The Fosse Way in its course from Lincoln to Exeter skirted the western border of the county along the eastern slope of the Cotswolds, passing further on through Cirencester. Watling Street ran along its eastern boundary on its way from Canterbury through London and St. Albans to Wroxeter and Chester. Both of these roads altogether missed the area occupied by the county, but the district was obviously too important to be left entirely without cross communication. Through the heart of the county ran a branch road, afterwards known as Akeman Street, which, starting from St. Albans, made its way through Aylesbury, past Alchester to Cirencester, where it met the Fosse Way. Its course through the county can be easily traced. Entering from the east, about two miles from the hamlet of Blackthorne near Ambrosden, it passes thence through Wretchwick and Chesterton along the northern edge of Kirtlington Park; crossing the Cherwell, it skirts the southern side

of Tackley Park to Stonesfield, and then passing through Wychwood Forest continues in a direct line by way of Asthall to Cirencester. Thus the passage of the country from east to west was secured. Nor was this all; the Alchester mentioned above, as we shall presently see, was a Roman camp situated just south of where Bicester now stands. From it, for sixteen miles in a straight line, another Roman road has been traced. Passing southward over the Otmoor where swamp and marsh taxed all their skill to make a sound causeway, it passed by Beckley, Headington and Sandford Brake to Dorchester, from which point its course is not so clear. There is little doubt, however, that it crossed the Thames and passed on to Calleva, or Silchester. In addition to these roads the Romans also made use of the British trackway, the Icknield Way, to which we have already referred. Along these roads, then, it is not difficult to imagine the heavy tramp of the Roman legions, and the gleam of their eagles as they passed from one station to another, picking up recruits as they went along from among the hardy sons of the soil.

As we have seen, the district submitted with good grace to the rule of the conqueror, rendering little necessary the establishment of fortified camps in its midst. So it is that the remains of Roman camps are rare, but still there are two or three interesting spots which can well be identified. You have learnt already in your history lessons that many towns of Roman origin end in " -chester " or " -cester ", the ending being derived from the Latin word " castra ", a camp. Looking at our own county the names of three places only are thus constructed, Bicester, Chesterton, and Dorchester. In spite of its name, Bicester probably had no existence in Roman times, but it was the immediate successor of the camp at Alchester in the neighbourhood. About a mile south of the present town, where the Oxford road turns to the north, are to be seen a few low mounds and some irregularities in the meadows. These look commonplace enough to the uninitiated, but the skilled eye has little difficulty in tracing out a square camp measuring some 360 yards each way. The build-

ings themselves, easily falling to decay, have long since disappeared; but the foundations, covered over in the course of ages, remain to tell us something of what the place was like. There is the plan of the camp through which the highway between it and Dorchester ran north and south, while east and west it was traversed by Akeman Street. At each of the four corners stood a rounded tower, the site of that on the south-east being one of the most easily recognizable portions of the whole camp. Not only does the method of its construction bear indisputable evidence as to its origin, but the discovery of pottery, coins, and other Roman relics shows us that here in those far off times the Roman soldiers kept their post and lived their arduous lives. After its disuse as a military station Alchester seems never to have been transformed into an ordinary civil town, but, falling into decay, the materials of which it was built were probably carried away to build the "New Town" of Burencester, or Bicester, as we call it to-day.

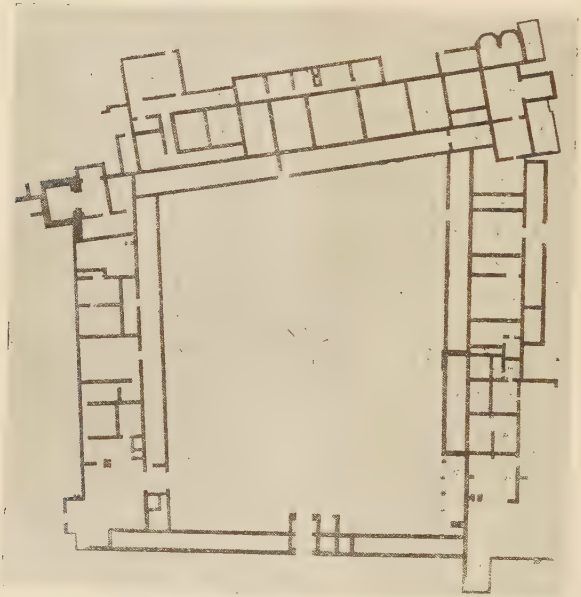
With Dorchester it was quite otherwise. Here the Roman station gradually merged into the town, and as the years passed by the successive buildings on the site completely obliterated the marks of the old camp. So much then for the only spots in the county which show clearly that Roman stations stood there. But the question will naturally arise, was not Oxford itself, the Oxford which was soon to play so important a part in its country's history, ever the site of a Roman town? There is nothing to show that it was. Neither of the roads which we find intersecting the county came near it; the Akeman Street at its nearest point is eight miles away, while the road from Alchester left it on the right in its direct course to the south. Nor do the many excavations that have been made in and about the city bring to light Roman relics such as are found in considerable abundance in other parts of the county.

III. Domestic Life

Although there are few military stations in this apparently peaceful district, many remains of the homesteads or villas of the Romans have been found from time to time. To see what these Roman buildings were like you must go outside the county where they have been more carefully preserved, to Silchester and Bath, to Cirencester, and to Chedworth just over the border in Gloucestershire.

A portion of one villa, however, you will be able to see, and that is at North Leigh. North Leigh is situated on the road between Witney and Woodstock, an easy cycle ride from either of those places, and from Oxford. But first of all, as to what these villas were like. You will, of course, not expect to find that they were anything like a so-called villa of to-day. They were probably the country residences of Roman officials, or of men who had been brought up under Roman influences and had acquired their manners and customs; some of them, perhaps, military officers; some concerned with the more peaceful occupations of life. Each of such villas was a complete establishment, part country house, part farm, and containing in itself everything necessary not only for the maintenance of its owner, but also for the numerous dependants who lived with him. A large courtyard or quadrangle formed the central part of the villa, and round this were the rooms devoted to the accommodation of the owner and his family. Around the quadrangle ran a covered colonnade or veranda, in the centre of which a fountain often played, while the remaining space was laid out in gardens. In close proximity were the houses of the slaves and retainers, the stables, mills, granaries, and all the necessary outbuildings for a large household. The buildings themselves were usually of one story only, the lower portion being built of stone or brick, the upper of wood, plaster, and stucco. Within were the many luxurious appointments which the wealthy Romans knew how to appreciate, and

everywhere, on the floors, the tessellated pavement. It is these pavements fitted together with little cubical *tessellae* of various colours, and woven into intricate patterns, that often give the first indications of the site of a Roman villa. As the buildings fell into decay the débris of the upper portions buried the floor, and long years of neglect covered them up completely, leaving



Plan of the North Leigh Villa

them to be unearthed and to tell their tale to later generations. Another point which you will observe if you take the trouble to examine carefully the remains of any of these habitations is, that the rooms were warmed by a cleverly arranged apparatus under the floors called a hypocaust. These hypocausts, being built in with the foundations, are usually in a fairly good state of preservation, and show the flues and pillars carefully constructed

with tiles. The Roman coming from the sunny south felt keenly the cold blasts of our winter climate, and not only selected the site of his villa to give it the warmest aspect, but also took care to have it well warmed and supplied with baths both hot and cold. For the finest specimen of Roman baths you will, of course, examine the extensive remains at Bath when you get the chance.

The North Leigh villa was first discovered in 1813. It was afterwards more carefully examined in 1815-16, and a small portion of it preserved under the direction of the Duke of Marlborough of that time. The large quadrangle was found to measure 212 by 187 feet, and to have around it about sixty rooms. The largest of these, situated in the north-west corner, was 33 by 25 feet, and contained a large and perfect pavement, some portion of which was in a good state of preservation. What remains of it now you must see for yourself, but the accompanying plan will give you some idea of the importance of these old buildings.

Now consider for a moment where you would expect to find other remains of a similar character. You will probably reply in the vicinity of the Roman roads, and so it is. At Stonesfield, on the western side of Blenheim Park, a very fine villa was discovered during ploughing in 1711. Four tessellated pavements, one of great size and splendid design, were unearthed, but unhappily, all have been scattered, and now the very site is lost. This, you will see, was along the line of Akeman Street. Close at hand, too, at Fawler, another pavement was discovered when the Great Western Railway Company were constructing their line from Oxford to Worcester.

Along our other Roman road between Alchester and Dorchester, villas have also been discovered at Beckley and Wheatley, the former small, but the latter of considerable size. These also have now entirely disappeared. Remains of Roman pottery have been found on the Otmoor, near Fencot, and on the Sewage Farm at Littlemore, specimens of which are preserved in the Ashmolean Museum. As to coins, so many have been found in various parts that it would seem, as one writer observes, that the

Romans spent most of their time in losing money. In the neighbourhood of Wood Eaton they are constantly being ploughed up, while at Evenley, just over the border in Northamptonshire, a hoard of no less than 3,077 coins was found in 1853. Other notable finds have also been made at Wigginton, Fringford, Middleton, and Woodperry; indeed, practically every part of the county bears some trace of its former Roman masters.

CHAPTER III

THE SAXON AND THE DANE

I. The Saxon Settlements

The first four hundred years of the Christian era, as we saw in the last chapter, were years of comparative peace and prosperity, under the vigorous rule of the Romans ; then came two hundred years of which we know so little that they have been aptly called the " two lost centuries of Britain " ; and then another four hundred years, standing out in such striking contrast to the first period, that one is almost astounded at the successive acts of piracy and battle, of plunder and bloodshed, of treachery and murder.

Those of you who have read the story of the nations which, in succession, made themselves masters of the known world, will not be surprised to find that the time came at last when the once powerful Roman Empire could no longer protect her extensive frontiers. Weakened by decay within, and by attack from without, she was at last compelled, somewhere about the year 408, to withdraw her legions from Britain and to concentrate her attention on attacks nearer home. Even before the final evacuation of the country it became obvious to the piratical hordes which inhabited the opposite shores that these fertile and desirable islands would soon become an easy prey to them. So much did the imperial government realize this that, during her later years of occupation, a Roman officer, called the Count of the Saxon Shore, was appointed to superintend and protect the whole of the south-east coast of the island. At last the chance of the pirates came, and between the years 450 and 1066, Jute and Engle, Saxon and Dane, made frequent expeditions to these shores.

Your history books will tell you of the successive settlements which were made upon the coast; how the Jutes descended upon Thanet somewhere about 449; how the South Saxons landed at Selsey in 477; and how the West Saxons, sailing up Southampton Water, laid the foundation of what was afterwards to be the powerful Kingdom of Wessex. With the descents upon the eastern coast, and the kingdoms established there, we have little to do; none of these directly influenced the history of our own county, except those which afterwards formed the Kingdom of Mercia, and of them we must speak later.

In the preceding chapters you will have observed that our information is largely derived from the book of the soil, but with the Angle and the Saxon we begin to have written records to depend upon. Not that these records were made at the time when the events happened, for, as a matter of fact, the first of the Saxon Chronicles was not written till at least three hundred years after the first landing, but still at a time when the traditional stories had not altogether lost their value. It is to the Saxon Chronicles then, written by the monks in the religious houses, and probably in the first instance under the direction of Alfred the Great, that we have to turn for our information on the events of these times. The first of these records which concerns our own county runs as follows :—

"571. In this year Cuthwulf fought against the Bretwalas (Britons) at Bedcenford and took four towns, Lygeanburh and Ægelesburh and Bœnesingtun and Egonesham. And the same year he died."

Now the last three of these towns are undoubtedly Aylesbury, Bensington, or, as we call it now, Benson, and Eynsham, and thus, although the Chiltern Hills had been an impassable barrier to the marauders on the east, they offered to the Dobūni no protection against the West Saxons, who crossed the Thames, and operating in all probability from the basin of the Cherwell, took them in the rear. Oxfordshire, then, at the end of the sixth century, formed part of the West Saxon Kingdom.

II. Wessex and Mercia

At the opening of the seventh century a new cloud appeared upon the horizon. Thus far the enemies of the Oxfordshire Britons had advanced upon them from the south, but now there were ominous threatenings in the north. Sailing up the Trent and the Ouse, the Welland and the Nen, other invaders had taken possession of the centre of the country, and were gradually forming there that kingdom which was afterwards to be called Mercia.

In 626 is recorded the accession of the Mercian King Penda, one of the most famous fighting champions of paganism, and one who did not hesitate to extend his frontiers to the furthest possible limits. In pushing towards the south he came into conflict with Cwichelm, the West Saxon King of the time, and after defeating him at Cirencester, secured a treaty by which the Thames was to be his southern boundary line. Thus began that game of see-saw, in which the Oxfordshire district was sometimes in the power of Mercia, sometimes under Wessex, and often the scene of many a conflict between the two.

While speaking of Penda it is interesting to note that, heathen though he was, his descendants evidently came under the influence of Christianity, for we are told that the old parish church of St. Mildred, which stood in Oxford along the line of Turl Street, somewhere near the corner of Brasenose Lane, was dedicated to his grand-daughter. The church itself has long since been pulled down to make way for Lincoln College, but it is evident that at this time Oxford itself had come into existence. And, indeed, so acceptable a site for a town could not long have passed unnoticed. The level stretch of gravelly land, raised above the flood-water of the river, and protected on three sides by streams, formed an ideal spot for an outpost settlement. The Mercians coming from the north along the valley of the Cherwell must necessarily cross the river here in the hollow, between Cumnor Hill on the one hand and Shotover on the other, and to hold the fords was to possess

the key of the situation ; thus Oxford gradually grew in importance as a military position.

In 597 St. Augustine landed in Kent, and began his mission to the barbarous Saxons and the subjugated Britons, living long enough to see Christianity successfully planted in that part of the country. But Oxfordshire was pagan still, and remained so till 634, when, in the reign of Cynegils, Birinus landed and penetrated into the heart of the West Saxon Kingdom. By the faithfulness of this priest, Cynegils was converted and baptized, Oswald, King of the Northumbrians, being present at this ceremony as his godfather. Then the two kings joined in making a gift to Birinus of the strong place by the water, the city of Dorcic, the Durocina of the Romans, and the modern Dorchester, that it might become the seat of a bishopric. Towards the close of the seventh century the See of the West Saxon bishopric was transferred to Winchester, and Oxfordshire came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Leicester ; but about 950 Dorchester became again the head of a much extended diocese, and so remained till Bishop Remigius finally transferred the See to Lincoln in 1087.

The next event of importance occurs in connexion with the story of the founding of the nunnery of St. Frideswide. In the year 727, the story goes, there ruled over Oxford a king named Didan, who had a daughter whose beauty was only surpassed by the holiness of her life. She, being desirous of dedicating herself to the Church, begged her father to build her a nunnery where she might take the veil. The King yielded to her request, and, somewhere on the site where the cathedral now stands, there grew up a stately building in which she was installed. But her beauty and charm had captivated the hearts of many young men who would gladly have become her suitors, and among them that ' young and sprightly prince ', Algar, King of Leicester. Rough and ready were the methods of wooing in those days, and ambassadors were sent not only to urge his suit, but also with secret instructions to carry her off by force if necessary. Finding fair means unavailing they attempted to secure her by rougher

methods, only to find that her sanctity was so great as to strike them with blindness for their rash action. When King Algar heard of the fate which had befallen his ambassadors he became more determined than ever to achieve his purpose, and set off to urge his suit in person. Warned of his approach, the lady determined on flight, and, escaping westward up the river, took refuge in a shelter for swine, among the woods at Bampton. To this place the prince followed her in hot haste, but just at the moment when the prize seemed ready to fall into his hands he, too, was stricken with blindness, and rendered helpless. This misfortune brought him to his senses, and showed him the folly of persisting in his ill-advised efforts. Repenting of his rashness, he begged that his punishment might be removed, and the saintly lady, having given him sight again, sent him away a sadder and wiser man. Three years passed, however, before St. Frideswide returned to her nunnery at Oxford, years that were occupied in many gracious acts of healing and mercy, which the holiness of her life gave her power to perform. The whole story may be seen in the very beautiful stained-glass window which Sir Edward Burne-Jones designed for the Latin chapel in the cathedral at Oxford.

In all probability the foundation of St. Frideswide's nunnery had much to do with the origin of Oxford as a permanent settlement, for in those times the religious houses formed a nucleus for other houses whose inhabitants found protection in the sanctity with which the monasteries were invested.

In 688 Ina had once more asserted the supremacy of Wessex, and his successor Cuthred, none the less keen to improve the position, crossed the Thames and inflicted defeat upon the Mercian King Ethelbald, at a place still called Battle Edge, about a mile from Burford. This victory of the Wessex King seems to have been celebrated as late as the eighteenth century, although all conscious connexion with the original event had been lost. On Midsummer Eve, with feasting and revelry, the people of Burford were accustomed to carry through the town the effigies of a giant and dragon, a dim reminiscence of the

standard of the defeated king, which bore a dragon emblazoned on it.

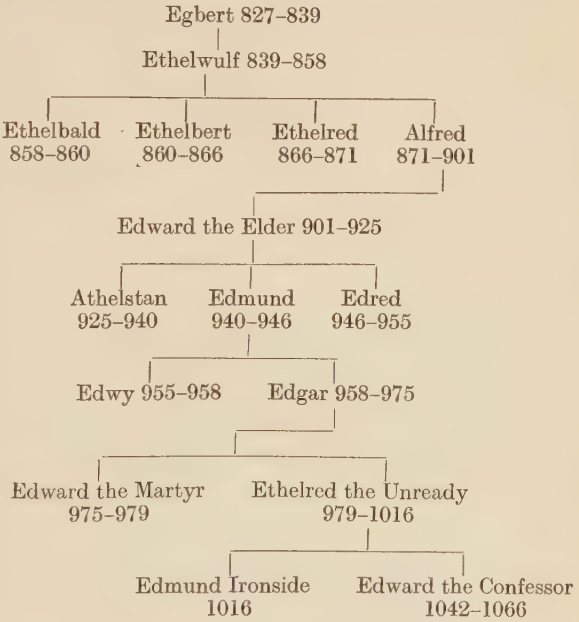
With the next succeeding leaders of the rival kingdoms, the position was again reversed. Offa, the Mercian King, harried the whole frontier line along the Thames, and finally meeting Cynewulf at Bensington, entirely defeated him, driving his enemies over the river, and bringing the northern portion of Berkshire under Mercian sway. For fifty years the Mercian boundary was south of the Thames, until in 827 Egbert of Wessex once and for all brought Mercia under the West Saxon lordship.

III. The Coming of the Danes

Whether Egbert ever brought the whole of England under his rule, as some think, is a very doubtful question. At all events, there was still little prospect of peace, for a new and more persistent foe soon began to make his presence felt. Following the example of the early invaders, the fierce and warlike Danes, equally dreaded by land and sea, were beginning to make their descent upon the coasts. Sailing up the rivers and harrying the surrounding country from their boats, they struck fear into the very heart of the country. Of their conflict with the early Saxon kings you will read in your history books; of the brave and heroic deeds of Alfred the Great, and how under him some measure of peace was secured for the country. This notable king was born at Wantage in Berkshire, and after a youth wisely spent in study, was early called to show his ability in war and government. Although there is little to connect him with our own county, one of his greatest military achievements considerably influenced the course of events in the district. In 871, following their usual practice, the Danes had pushed up the Thames as far as Reading. Finding there that Ethelbert and his brother Alfred were marching in force against them, they took up a strong position on the Berkshire hills at Æscesdun. A fierce conflict ended in a glorious victory for Alfred, a victory which saved Oxford

and the surrounding neighbourhood from any immediate fear of pillage at their hands.

And now, in order to understand the course of events as they afterwards affected our own county, it will be necessary to keep in mind the following table :—



Alfred, as you see, was succeeded by his son Edward the Elder, a king who, though not so illustrious a man as his father, appears, nevertheless, to have been a strong and determined ruler, and it is in his reign that the first definite reference to Oxford in the Chronicles occurs. Thus it runs :—

" A.D. 912. This year died Æthered ealdorman of the Mercians, and King Edward took possession of London and Oxford and of all the land which owed obedience thereto."

Now this Æthered had married Æthelflæd, the sister of

Edward, and reading the above extract in the light of other information which the Chronicle supplies, it seems probable that Mercia had been under the rule of the dependent prince Æthered, and that on his death his wife Æthelflæd had retained the overlordship of his territory with the exception of Oxford, which Edward took under his own rule. Remember, too, that at this time the Danes

The Castle Mound

were persistently making their attacks up the rivers, and you will be able to appreciate another very important fact.

After the death of Æthered, Æthelflæd, his wife, sometimes called "The Lady of Mercia", and Edward her brother, set to work to erect strong burhs or fortresses in commanding positions on the rivers which were open to the Danish attack.

The Lady of Mercia is directly recorded to have built such burhs at Warwick and Tamworth among other places, and to this day there remain at these two towns the large mounds which form the stronghold of the fortresses.

Now, although the Chronicle does not say so, it is extremely likely that the large mound which stands out so conspicuously in the precincts of Oxford Castle, was thrown up for a similar purpose ; for when it is remembered that a hostile force in possession of the ford would have command of the basin of the Cherwell and the road to the north, it is easy to see the necessity for strongly fortifying such a position.

How Oxford began in the houses, which naturally clustered round the nunnery of St. Frideswide, we have already seen, and now there arises another reason for the growth of the city. Near the mound were built the rooms necessary for the accommodation of the inmates of the fortress, rooms in which many an important and not always creditable act was afterwards to take place ; while, outside the palisade arose the houses of citizens glad to avail themselves of the protection which the castle afforded.

And now we are approaching a time when the attacks of the Danes become more and more persistent. The kings who had followed Edward the Elder had resisted their encroachments and ravagings with more or less success, generally with less, and each succeeding year saw the Danes establishing themselves more firmly in the country. Then in 979, there came to the throne that misguided king, Ethelred the Unready, or "Ill-advised" as the epithet really means. Weak and vacillating, and submitting himself to the advice of evil counsellors, he adopted the foolish policy of buying off the Danes. What enormous sums were spent in this way it is difficult to say, but in 1002 this unready king spent £24,000 for that purpose, a very large amount indeed in those days. The chance of securing blackmail naturally made the Danes more persistent still, and then Ethelred, still ill-advised, proceeded to adopt measures foolish in the extreme, which had a lasting effect upon the history of the country. He determined to rid himself of his enemies at one stroke by a wholesale massacre, and on St. Brice's day, in the year 1002, his plans were carried out with ruthless severity. In Oxford, the hunted Danes took refuge in the church of

St. Frideswide, and succeeded for a time in holding their pursuers at bay; but the mob, determined not to be thwarted, set fire to the building, and those of the fugitives who were not stifled by the smoke fell before the swords of their enemies outside.

From that time Oxford was a marked city to the Danes, who only waited the time and opportunity for vengeance. Nor was the punishment long in coming. In 1009 the Danish host poured over the forest-clad ridges of the Chilterns, down past Dorchester, and stormed the city. Its wooden houses, its palisaded castle, fell an easy prey to them, half the houses were burnt to the ground, and a wretched dismantled town was left to mark their revenge.

IV. The Supremacy of the Danes

In 1013 the Danes came again, this time under Sweyn, the most ruthless of all their commanders. Oxford, left dismantled by the previous attack, fell an easy prey to the invader, who soon made himself master of all the country south of the Thames. Then Ethelred, deserted by his own followers and beset by enemies, fled over the sea. Among the evil counsellors of the unhappy king was one whose name stands out conspicuously in the dark history of these troubled times, Eadric Streona, or the Gainer, a man of strange duplicity and cunning, who rarely shrank from any act of treachery so long as it served his purpose. To his treachery in court and camp alike the fall of Ethelred was no doubt largely due.

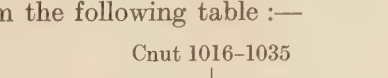
Sweyn's success, however, was short-lived and, at his death in 1014, Ethelred was recalled, under promise of amendment, to resume his post as king. An attempt was made to reconcile the conflicting interests of Saxon and Dane, and in the next year a great council of the nation was held at Oxford.

"A.D. 1015. In this year was the great meeting at Oxford; and there ealdorman Eadric insnared Sigeferth and Morkere, the chief thanes in the Seven Burghs. He enticed them into his chamber, and therein they were foully slain."

Thus, first the monastery of St. Frideswide, and now the castle, became the scene of treachery and murder. The possessions of the unhappy thanes were at once appropriated by the king, but only for a short time. He died in 1016, but not before his son, Edmund Ironside, who seems to have disapproved of his father's policy, had married Aldgitha, the widow of the murdered Sigeferth, and asserted his authority in the thane's territory. With the courage and determination which were characteristic of him, Edmund strove to stem the tide of Danish invasion, but all in vain. Deserted by the treacherous Eadric, he was compelled to come to terms with Cnut, at the Island of Olney, near Gloucester. Thence, turning eastward towards London, he appears to have stopped at Oxford on the way, and once again the castle becomes the scene of murder. The cowardly Eadric, for all treachery is cowardly, actually induced his own son to undertake the foul crime, as the following reference shows :—

" Edmund the King was a few days afterwards killed at Oxford by treachery. And thus he was murdered. When the king, so terrible to his enemies, and so much feared in his kingdom, went one night into his private chamber, the son of ealdorman Eadric, who had, by the counsel of his father, concealed himself there . . . stabbed the King twice with a sharp knife, leaving the instrument in the wound, and then left him and fled."

With the death of Edmund Ironside, Cnut succeeded unopposed to the government of the whole country. The course of Danish rule during the next twenty-six years will be seen from the following table :—



They were apparently years of peace in the county, and, as events prove, Oxford was becoming an important political centre. The mutual hostility of the rival races seems to have subsided, and in 1018 the castle was the

scene of an important Gemot, at which Dane and Angle agreed to live together under Eadgar's law. In 1035 Cnut died at Shaftesbury, and immediately after the Witan again assembled at Oxford to decide between the claims of his two sons for the kingship. In the end it was agreed that Harold Harefoot should have the northern portion of the country and Harthacanut the southern, but the arrangement lasted for a short time only. In 1040 Harold died at Oxford, and two years later his brother came to an untimely end. Thus terminated the Danish sovereignty, in support of which so much blood had been shed.

V. The Last of the Saxons

Now looking back at the table of Saxon kings, you will see that Edmund Ironside had a brother, Edward by name, whose saintly life earned for him the title of "the Confessor". Edward has a special interest for us, since there is evidence that he was born at Islip, some seven miles above Oxford, on the Cherwell. This interesting fact appears incidentally in a charter, granted by that king, confirming the gift of Githeslepe or Islip to his new Abbey of St. Peter at Westminster. The statement runs thus: "I bid you know that I have given Christ and St. Peter at Westminster that cotlif (hamlet) that I was born in, by name Githeslepe."

In all probability Githeslepe is our Islip, for the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are still Lords of the Manor and present to the living, a fact which must come home to every boy and girl in the village, when he remembers that the school was founded in 1710 by Dr. South, Dean of Westminster.

During this period of respite from war the religious houses made great strides in wealth and influence. The Abbey of Abingdon, founded in the sixth century, was now one of the most powerful religious houses in the country. Among other additions to its endowments during this time it secured the Church of St. Martin in Oxford, since then the city church.

At the same time Eynsham Abbey was flourishing, for

in the Domesday Survey in 1087 we find that it also had a church in Oxford, the Church of St. Ebba, or St. Ebbe's as it is now called. Dorchester was still the seat of a diocese extending far to the north, and not only in the political world but also in the religious life of the nation Oxfordshire was playing no mean part.

And now this long and troubled period is coming to a close, but not an end of peace. There is to be one more mighty struggle, one more anxious time of treachery and rebellion, before the country passed under the rigorous rule of Norman William.

Although Edward the Confessor was king, the country was still subdivided into powerful earldoms, whose chiefs exerted no small influence over the policy of their sovereign. Of these, Godwin, Earl of Wessex, was one of the most influential. On his death in 1053 we find his son Harold succeeding him in Wessex, while another son, Tostig, was Earl of Northumbria. Tostig's rule, however, was far from acceptable to his subjects, who rose in rebellion in 1065, and chose Morkere to be earl in his place. Such a change in government required the approval of the nation, and once more we find an important Gemot held at Oxford to discuss the opposing claims. In spite, however, of all Harold's efforts to effect a reconciliation between Tostig and his rebellious subjects, the action of the people was confirmed, and the deposed earl went abroad to secure the assistance of Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, in reinstating him in his earldom.

Meanwhile Edward the Confessor died, and Harold was chosen king in his place by the Witan. Upon him, then, fell the unpleasant duty of opposing the combined forces of his brother Tostig and the King of Norway, when they arrived to recapture Northumbria. Putting on one side his own feelings, and acting now in accordance with the wishes of the nation, Harold met and completely defeated the invading army at Stamford Bridge, a victory which cost him dear. Scarcely was the battle over when, with a depleted and weary army, he was called south to withstand a still more formidable foe. How he fell before the Norman Conqueror you know well already, but how dif-

ferent might the issue have been if only his brother Tostig had been on his side instead of proving the means of weakening his army when it required every possible support! Thus ended in England the rule of the Saxons; by force of arms they had made themselves masters of the country, and by force of arms they were to be reduced to submission and bondage.

CHAPTER IV

OXFORDSHIRE UNDER THE NORMANS

I. Robert D'Oily

With the Battle of Hastings fell once and for all the Saxon supremacy in England, and the country came under the iron rule of the Conqueror. Not that the whole country immediately submitted to his sway, for north of the Thames and westward in Devon and Cornwall there was still many a conflict before him; but the power of the Saxon leaders was broken, leaving the people with little chance of taking combined action against him.

Our own county seems to have escaped altogether the ravages of William's forces, and the records which state that he marched on London by way of Wallingford, besieging Oxford as he went, are probably unreliable.

In completing his conquest William adopted the plan of placing the government of the counties in the hands of capable men who had crossed over with him from the continent, and shortly after the great battle we find Robert D'Oily appointed "Constabularius" of Oxford. It is about his name that the chief events of the early Norman period in this county cluster. On taking up his post the first thing that would naturally claim his attention would be to find some stronghold which he could make his head quarters; and his choice naturally fell on Oxford. As we have already seen, Oxford under the Saxons and Danes had been a town of no small political importance; and when to this is added the advantage of its position as a military station we can easily understand its selection for the purpose.

Now whatever else the Normans knew, they knew

how to build fortresses; not the palisaded earthworks to which the Saxons entrusted themselves, but solid impregnable castles capable of defying assaults and dominating the countryside around. Such castles the Conqueror and his followers set out to build at all the important strategic points in the country, and many of these, or at least their ruins, remain in England to this day.

With the purpose then of building a castle from which he could control the country round, Robert D'Oily came to Oxford, and the first thing that strikes an observer as he inspects what remains of D'Oily's work is, how little it conforms to the idea of what a Norman castle should be. Instead of being in the centre of the old city boundary it is at its western extremity; instead of being at the highest point, which in this case is at Carfax, it is at one of the lowest; nor is the reason far to seek. We have already seen that Æthelflæd, the Lady of the Mercians, had thrown up the big mound and surrounded it by earthworks and a moat in order to withstand the incursions of the Danes, who came mainly by river. Here, at least, were the beginnings of a fortress, to adapt which for the purpose of a castle would be a much easier task than to disturb the settled condition of the centre of the city and start afresh. Precisely how much D'Oily found and how much he added it is difficult to say, more particularly as the old foundations were ruthlessly disturbed when the prison was built in 1805.

According to the Chronicles of Osney Abbey it was in 1071 that Robert D'Oily began the fortifications of Oxford Castle. Of all his handiwork two specimens only remain to the present day, the strong square castle which stands by the side of the mill stream, and the crypt of St. George's Chapel, which, although slightly removed from its original position by the building operations of 1805, was yet put together again in the same form in which it was found.

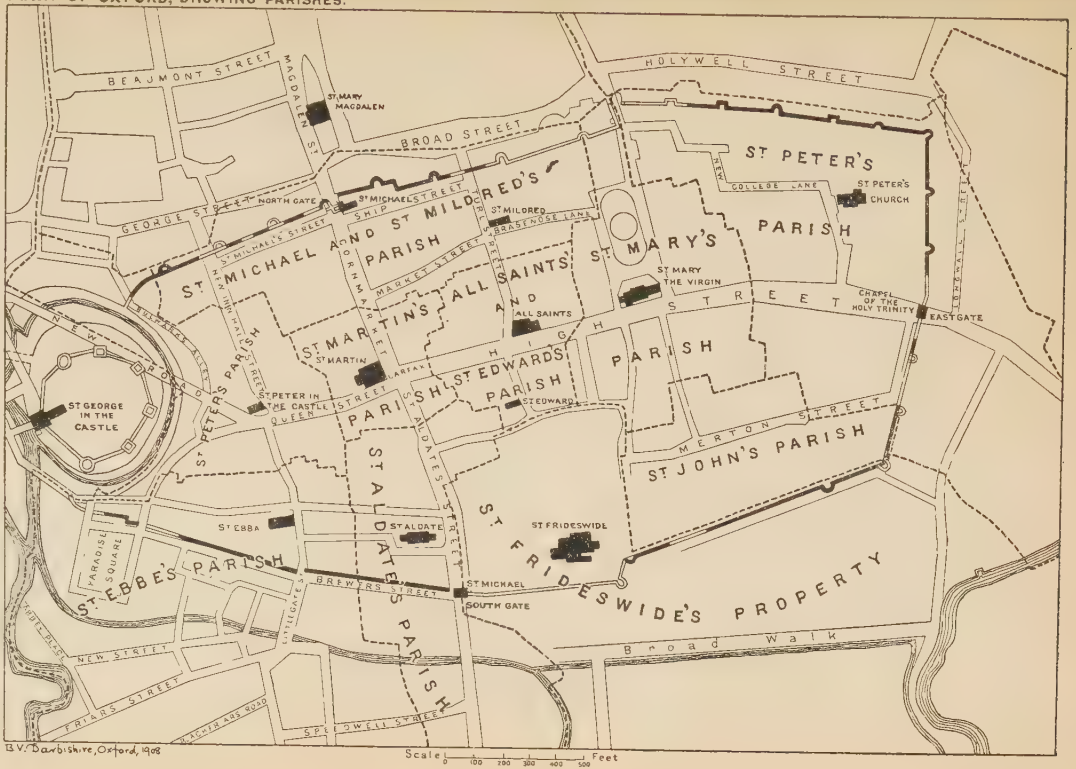
The castle, which was one of the first stone buildings of any importance that Oxford had seen, was probably a bastion tower to protect the western approach to the

Oxford Castle

town, and one peculiarity of its structure must be noticed. On the top above the lead roof are traces of six round-headed doorways now built up. These gave access to the *hourdes*, a movable wooden gallery which could be thrown out in time of danger for the purpose of discharging missiles on the heads of the assailants below. St. George's Chapel within the castle precincts was built in 1074 by Robert D'Oily and his pledged comrade at arms, Roger D'Ivry, to both of whom, as we shall see later, the Conqueror had given no small portion of the land in the county. Other buildings there must have been to accommodate the various gemots which had met here during the Danish and later Saxon times, and which were still required for a similar purpose up to Stephen's reign. With regard to the walls of the castle, it is most likely that D'Oily contented himself with deepening the trench that already existed, strengthening the earthen *vallum* with masonry where necessary, and erecting an effective palisade on the top. That a complete stone wall ran round either castle or city at that time seems altogether unlikely, as no remains of Norman stonework have subsequently been found.

One other point must be mentioned, and that is the use to which D'Oily put the great mound which he found within the castle precincts. Rising to a height of some 60 feet, it has on the summit a circular space of 40 feet diameter, a not altogether unlikely spot for the erection of a keep ; and although such a building is represented in old pictures, it is not by any means certain that it ever existed. For one reason, the structure of the mound is so loose as to render it very unfit to carry the weight of a substantial Norman keep. Traces of the foundations of a ten-sided building have, however, been found, and, still further, at the top of the mound and under its surface, is a small arched stone chamber reached by a narrow flight of steps. In the centre of this vault is a well, now dried up, but at one time providing a plentiful supply of water. Although the chamber itself is obviously of later date, it is quite likely that the well had existed long before, and here, then, is a well

PLAN OF OXFORD, SHOWING PARISHES.



B.V. Darbishire, Oxford, 1908

from which the garrison in a keep above could secure their water supply in time of need, for it is scarcely conceivable that it should be dug there for any other purpose.

What D'Oily did for the castle he also did for the city, and secured its protection by a vallum and ditch. The area enclosed at that time was, in all probability, the

THE OLD CITY WALL, FROM NEW COLLEGE GARDENS
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

same as was later defended by the stone walls, the course of which we have no difficulty in tracing.

Small in area and oblong in shape, the original confines of the city extended for half a mile from the East gate at the corner of Merton Street to the West gate near the castle, and for a quarter of a mile from Bocardo in the North to the South gate at the end of Brewer's Street in St. Aldate's. East and west through the city ran High Street and Castle Street; north and south the

St. Michael's Tower

Cornmarket and St. Aldate's, the two roads crossing each other at Carfax, "The Four Ways."

At or near each of these four exits from the city stood a church, two of which are standing at the present time on the same site as their originals. Those at the north and south gate were dedicated to St. Michael, and those east and west to St. Peter; thus we have St. Michael at the North Gate and St. Michael at the South Gate, St. Peter in the East and St. Peter le Bailey, or as the name indicates, St. Peter in the Castle. Of the two churches which remain in their original positions the most striking feature is undoubtedly the tower of St. Michael at the North Gate, built by D'Oily himself, or perhaps, as some authorities maintain, restored by him from one that stood there previously. However that may be, there are indications in its masonry that later, at any rate, it formed part of the city wall and served not only as the bell tower of the church, but also for the purpose of defending the north gate. Of the other three churches, that of St. Peter in the East alone shows traces of D'Oily's work in the crypt which formed part of the ancient building; St. Michael's at the South Gate was pulled down when Wolsey began to build his famous college, while a new St. Peter le Bailey occupies another site not very far from the original church. In addition to these churches D'Oily also built that of St. Mary Magdalen just outside the north gate of the city. While making mention of the city walls it will be well to note that New Road, as its name indicates, is of modern construction, the space through which it now runs being in those days within the fortifications of the castle. To give access to the city from the west, D'Oily built across the river the Hythe Bridge, on the same spot where the modern Hythe Bridge now stands. Travellers from the west could cross this bridge and, skirting the north-west wall, find an entrance by the Bocardo or North Gate.

How D'Oily was influenced to undertake this work is an interesting story if the Chronicles speak true. In those days the most meritorious action a man could perform was to build a church, and the next to build a bridge;

the former to preserve men's souls, the latter to save their bodies when the winter floods ran high and fording the stream was a difficult and perilous business. Immensely rich for a man of his time, he is said to have harried the churches everywhere, and the Abbey of Abingdon in particular, in order to increase his wealth.

The chronicler of the abbey tells how "he took away their possessions and sued them constantly at law, and

Bocardo Gate

sometimes put them at the mercy of the king. Amongst other evil deeds he took away, with the king's consent, a certain mead that lay outside the walls of Oxford, and made it over to the soldiers of the castle for their use. This loss grieved the brethren of Abingdon more than any other evil."

In response to the prayers of the monks a serious illness befell him, and in his hours of sickness there came a horrible dream in which he saw himself arraigned

before the Blessed Virgin and tormented by demons. Such an impression did the dream make upon him that the vows of reformation to which he pledged himself in pain were duly carried out, and the chronicler goes on to say, that, "As before that dream he was a plunderer of churches and the poor, so after it he was made a repairer of churches and a helper of the poor, and a doer

Old Hythe Bridge

of many good works. Amongst others, the great bridge on the north side of Oxford was built by him."

II. The Domesday Survey

And now it is time to turn our attention to the people who lived within these walls. In 1087 was made that survey of the whole country, the results of which were recorded in the Domesday Book. The pages of this book, as they may be seen in the copy in the Bodleian Library, look very uninviting indeed, but are not nearly so dull as

might be expected when they are turned into good plain English for us. From the records so far as they concern Oxford we find that there were within the city at that time 297 houses, of which 107 are described as *vastae*. Now *vastae* may have meant either empty of tenants or ruined and dismantled, and when it is remembered that in 1065 a riotous mob under Eadwine and Morkere got as far as Oxford and pillaged the town, it is quite likely that a considerable number of them were in ruins. At any rate there were 190 houses paying geld[1] to the king, and to these must be added forty-two which D'Oily possessed just outside the city walls in the manor of Holywell. Allowing four persons to each of these houses, a generous figure when one considers that they were small and mean compared with the houses in which we live now, we arrive at a population of about 1,000 souls at that time.

More interesting, however, is the list of those who owned the houses. To the king himself belonged twenty-five, to the Earls Alberic and William twelve ; the Church was well represented, the archbishop and five bishops owning sixty-nine. Two abbeys in the neighbourhood, Eynsham and Abingdon, owned between them twenty-seven, the Canons of St. Frideswide fifteen, and the Priest of St. Michael's two. But the most striking figures of all are those which show how many were held by the followers of the Conqueror. Within the walls there were eighty-three in addition to the thirty-seven held by the king and the Earls Alberic and William ; and without, as we have seen already, forty-two owned by D'Oily, no small proportion to be in the hands of the foreigner. Further, the eighty-three alluded to above are described as "mural mansions", that is houses whose owners, instead of paying the annual tax, were under obligation to maintain and repair a certain section of the walls—a duty which they were expected to discharge under penalty of the forfeiture of their property or a fine of forty shillings to the king.

Of the remainder liable to direct taxation, sixty-two

[1] Geld.—The tax paid to the Crown by English landowners before the Conquest, and continued under the Norman kings.

are recorded as being in the hands of thirty-seven citizens, whose names show them generally to be of Saxon ancestry. Where the poorest townsfolk lived, those who were unable to pay the king's geld, the record does not say. Either their houses were too poor to be taxed, or

Ruins of Osney Abbey

they lived as servants or dependants in the houses of their masters.

And now the question will naturally arise, why did these influential people, both lay and clerical, possess so many houses within the walls? Partly, because the property had value, but more particularly for the purpose of providing lodging when business brought them to the courts, the markets, and the councils in the city. In those days there were no hotels, and the religious houses which later gave shelter and accommodation to the traveller were

few in number. Hence the necessity arose for providing themselves and their retinues with accommodation when business brought them to the city.

It was during this period, in 1129, that the great Abbey of Osney was begun, an abbey destined to become in the height of its glory the third in size in the whole country. It was founded by Robert D'Oily the second, nephew and heir of the Constable, and stood outside the city wall on the spot now occupied by the Great Western goods station, the cemetery, and Osney mill. Its buildings are said to have covered an area equal to that of Christ Church, but, unhappily, at the present day not even a fragment remains. The only relics of the abbey still existing are the great bell which found a home in Wolsey's gate tower, and a stained-glass window in the cathedral which presents a picture of the old abbey tower.

III. Royal Visits to the County

Before considering other religious foundations established during the Norman period, it will be well to look at the general course of historical events so far as they concerned our county. There is no evidence to show that the Conqueror ever came to Oxford, but the Chronicles of Abingdon Abbey tell of a visit there, and of the great satisfaction which the king expressed with the learning and discipline of the monks. So greatly was he gratified that his son Henry was left there for a time to pursue his education, showing that keenness and ability which earned for him the name of Beauclerc. Later on, Henry came to Oxford, and there built for himself the Royal Palace of Beaumont on the north side of the city. Not only a scholar, but also like his brother William, a keen hunter, he made ample provision for the enjoyment of the sport which had such great attractions for the Norman kings.

According to Domesday there were five royal forests in the county, but of them all that of Wychwood with

Ruins of Beaumont Palace

its adjacent manor of Woodstock seems to have been the favourite. At Woodstock then, Henry built a royal lodge, a pleasant resort for himself, and destined to play no small part in the history of later kings. The reign of Henry I had generally been one of peace and recovery after the Norman subjugation, but when in 1135 he died the county felt to the full the stormy days of misrule which the reign of Stephen brought. Setting forth from the funeral of his predecessor at Reading, Stephen arrived at Oxford, and in the hall of the castle held the Council of 1135. In this important meeting he conciliated the popular favour by promising reforms; but the troublous times of his struggle with Queen Matilda were near at hand, and in 1139 we find him again meeting the Council at Oxford. There were then present three great bishops, united by blood, possessed of great power, and holding strong castles within their dioceses, Alexander of Lincoln, Roger of Salisbury, and Nigel of Ely. Suspecting their fidelity, Stephen had them thrown into prison, and insisted on the surrender of their castles before he would consider their release. In this way there fell into his hands the Castle of Banbury which Alexander of Lincoln had built in 1125; but though he accomplished his purpose the folly of his action raised up for him a host of enemies both within and without the Church.

Matters came to a crisis when in the autumn of 1139 Matilda landed in England. At that time Banbury Castle and the castle of Richard de Camville at Middleton were in the hands of Stephen, while Matilda's influence was mainly felt in the south of the county. At Wallingford, where she had secured the interest of Brian Fitzcount, the castle was garrisoned for her, while Robert D'Oily the second, the founder of Osney Abbey, delivered up Oxford Castle to her men. In addition Woodstock and Bampton also held out for the queen. It was in 1141 that Matilda, driven out of London, had taken refuge in Oxford Castle. Stephen pursued her and, taking up his residence at Beaumont Palace just outside the walls, maintained so vigorous a siege of the castle;

An Avenue in Wychwood Forest

that the besieged were put to the sorest straits for food. The rigour of the winter came to Matilda's aid, and in the dead of night with a few attendant nobles all clad in white, she escaped the vigilance of the hostile outposts, and crossing the river on the ice sped away across the meadows to Bagley Hill, and thence by way of Abingdon found shelter with her friend Brian Fitzcount, the Constable of Wallingford Castle.

Once again in 1153 we are told that Stephen came to Oxford. His own son and heir, Eustace, was dead, both sides were weary of the struggle and anxious for rest, and in the old castle terms of peace were agreed to which were subsequently ratified at the Treaty of Wallingford.

One of the greatest mistakes that Stephen made was in conciliating the powerful landowners by allowing them to fortify their houses and build castles. According to Domesday forty-nine castles existed in England at the time of the Survey, not much more than one to a county as the present number of counties goes. In Oxfordshire at the time of Stephen's accession D'Oily's castle was probably the only one, but during his reign no less than 375 sprang up throughout the country. How many of these were in our own county it is impossible to say. Banbury Castle we know was built by Alexander of Lincoln in 1125, while Middleton Castle was held by de Camville for the king. One of the first acts of Henry II's reign was to raze to the ground the castles which had sprung up unnecessarily, and with them fell castles at Ardley, King's Sutton, Evenley, Swerford, Culworth, Sulgrave, Adderbury, Grove Mill, and Somerton. On the other hand Chipping Norton Castle, Roger D'Ivry's Castle at Mixbury, Banbury, and Deddington Castles were allowed to remain.

IV. Religious Foundations

And now to return to the more peaceful evidences of the Norman period which our county supplies. During Stephen's visit to Oxford in 1139, when he ruthlessly cast the three bishops into prison and did his cause so much

harm, he is recorded to have performed at least one act of benevolence towards the Church. According to the registers of Godstow, King Stephen, his wife, and his son Eustace were present at the dedication of the nunnery, and all three contributed generously to its endowment.

Among other religious foundations of the time may

Dorchester Abbey (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

be noticed the Preceptory of the Knights Templars at Cowley, a Cistercian monastery at Oddington, on the Otmoor swamps, and the alien priory of Cogges, near Witney. One religious foundation of Stephen's time, however, requires especial mention. We have seen that in Saxon times Dorchester was the head of a diocese stretching away as far north as Lincoln, and so it continued till 1087. On the death of Bishop Wulfwy in

1067, the bishopric was given to Remigius, the almoner of the Benedictine Monastery of Fécamp, who came over with the Conqueror. He it was who determined to remove the seat of the diocese to Lincoln. His successor Alexander of Lincoln, who had been compelled to surrender his castle at Banbury to Stephen, turned the old cathedral at Dorchester into a house for Austin Canons. Under the protection of the Governors of Wallingford Castle, the canons set to work to build and rebuild until they had perfected the beautiful church which we see to-day.

The period of the Early Norman kings was fruitful in church-building, and the observant person may notice in many a village church traces of the work of their architects and builders. He will look for the small windows with semicircular heads, doorways, and chancel arches of the same pattern, sometimes ornamented and sometimes not. These and many other signs will tell him, whether his church was built in these far off days and, although Domesday does not specially mention churches, it is quite likely that 100 to 150 had their origin under the rule of the Norman kings. They stand to-day, many of them telling strange stories of the past to those who are able to interpret the hidden meaning of their windows and walls.

Iffley Church

CHAPTER V

OXFORDSHIRE UNDER THE PLANTAGENETS

I. Royal Visits to the County

In the preceding chapter we have seen that Henry I built for himself, just outside the north wall of the city, the royal palace of Beaumont. Completed in 1130, it became a favourite resort of the Plantagenet kings, and here, in 1157, Richard the Lion Heart was born. After many and varied changes in fortune, the latter stages of which it is difficult to follow, the palace fell into ruin, although some traces survived even as late as 1830. The only reminiscence of its existence to-day is to be found in the wide street known as Beaumont Street, which was built in 1820, to give more direct access to Worcester College.

The gardens of the palace were bounded by a bowling-green, the memory of which still survives in the name of Gloucester Green, the place where the cattle market is now held. To the south, between the bowling-green and the city wall, were irregular hedges on broken ground, called "Broken Heyes", a name till recently given to the short passage connecting Bulwarks Lane with George Street.

The other royal residence was the Manor of Woodstock. The splendid artificial lake which spreads its water before the north front of the present palace was an engineering triumph of later years; in those days the tiny stream of the Glyme wound its way along the bottom of the valley to join the Evenlode on the western side of the park. Well up on the northern bank of the river, and opposite to the present Woodstock entrance to the park, stood the old manor house. Here, in 1166, was born the youngest and favourite son of Henry I, John Lackland.

During the time of the later Plantagenet kings, Woodstock was much more frequently occupied by the royal family. In 1301 Edmund of Woodstock, the second son of Edward I and Queen Margaret, was born here, and a year later his sister Eleanor. The fate of Edmund was an unhappy one, for, espousing the cause of his half-brother, Edward II, who had been deposed by Queen Isabella and Mortimer, he was arrested for conspiracy and executed without mercy at Winchester in 1329. Of the twelve children of Edward III four were born at Woodstock; first, in 1330, the Black Prince, whose advent as heir to the throne was heralded with all the manifestations of rejoicing which accompany the birth of a royal prince.

During a portion of his early career the prince was educated at Queen's College, Oxford, the college founded under the patronage of his mother. Then, and subsequently, he was much at Woodstock, where the house in which he is said to have lived is still to be seen.

The three other children of Edward III born at Woodstock were Isabella, in 1334, Joanna, in 1335, and Thomas, the sixth and last son, in 1354.

II. Henry II

Now we must return to a more orderly review of the events which mark this period. Most of you who have visited Blenheim Park will have availed yourselves of the opportunity of taking a draught of clear cold water from the railed-in spring known as Fair Rosamund's Well. No doubt much that is mythical and unreliable has grown up about the name of Fair Rosamund, but as she played no small part in the early life of the first Plantagenet king, her story must not be altogether disregarded. Nobly born and of great beauty, she was favoured with the friendship of Henry II, who is said to have built her a bower in the park. The probability is that she was lodged in the manor house, but at any rate these marks of the king's favour aroused the jealousy of Queen Eleanor. The legend says that the queen, having

discovered by accident the retreat of her rival, offered to her the alternative of death by the dagger or by poison; but it is more likely that Rosamund, finding her position at Court unpleasant, voluntarily retired to Godstow Nunnery, where she died in 1177. She was buried before the altar in the chapel, and there for some years her remains rested in peace, the tomb becoming an object of reverence not only to wayfarers, but also to the worship-

Old View of Godstow Nunnery

pers who were attracted to the shrine by her sanctity. In 1191, however, Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, visited Godstow, and, seeing the tomb treated with more reverence than he thought desirable, ordered the body to be removed without the church. His instructions were duly carried out, but the nuns, feeling keenly the ignominious fate of one who had been beloved by their order, after a few years restored the coffin to its original resting-place, where it remained till the nunnery was dissolved in the reign of Henry VIII.

We must now turn our attention to one of the most striking characters of the time, one who did much to mould the history of the reign of Henry II. Attached to the household of Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of the king's accession, was a young Englishman of marked abilities named Thomas à Becket. The talents and industry of this remarkable man had secured for him the favour of his master, who showed his appreciation of his services by inducing Henry (at his accession) to appoint him to the high office of Chancellor. On the death of the aged Theobald, in 1162, Becket was further honoured by the king in being appointed to the vacant archbishopric. Now it must be remembered that the great abbeys and monasteries had by this time increased so much in wealth and influence that they were often able to thwart and check the king's power; and it was quite likely that Becket's appointment was due to Henry's desire to secure his services in carrying out the measures which he had in view to check the influence of the religious houses. In this, however, he was disappointed, for Becket, resigning his Chancellorship, became as austere and self-denying in his life as he had previously been luxurious and self-indulgent. It is commonly supposed that the rupture between himself and the king was due to his resistance to Henry's demand that all priests charged with offences should be tried before civil courts, instead of in the ecclesiastical courts as had formerly been the law. That this was the rock on which their friendship ultimately split there can be no doubt, but if the history of our own county is to be relied on, the beginning of the quarrel was far otherwise.

In 1163 the archbishop visited the king at Woodstock, and listened to a proposal by which the king had decided to convert a certain payment, previously received by the sheriff of the county, into a tax, to be paid to the crown. Becket, finding probably that such a change would be to the disadvantage of the Church, opposed it, and anger was displayed on both sides.

"By God's eyes," said the king, "the money shall be paid as revenue, and registered in the king's books."

"And by God's eyes," replied Becket, "while I live,

from land of mine no such payment shall be made—of the Church's right, no, not one penny."

Acting on the advice of the Pope, however, Becket submitted, and later in the same year waited upon the King again at Woodstock, and there promised "to keep the laws upon the faith of an honest man and without any prevarication whatsoever". Then, in 1164, the Constitutions of Clarendon were drawn up, by which it was agreed, among other things, that criminal clerks should be tried by the king's courts, that the sons of villeins should not be allowed to become clerks without the consent of their lord, and that no appeals should be made to the Pope without the consent of the king. Finding the other bishops yielding to these demands, Becket at first complied, and, as his chronicler says, waited on the king at Woodstock.

"In the course of his repentance, because he prepares as much as in him lies to recall and correct his errors, when his fellow bishops are either unwilling to recall the concessions, or through fear of the king, which lay upon them, dare not, the bishop (Becket) goes to the king's residence, the Chace of Woodstoke, surrounded with a wall of stone, where he had heard that the king was; but he was repulsed from the door, and returned to Canterbury."

This was the beginning of the end. Stripped of his possessions, Becket fled to France, and scarcely had he returned for a short reconciliation after six years of exile, when the fateful words which led to his death were uttered by the king. The ghastly crime at once turned popular opinion in favour of the murdered archbishop, and, being canonized by the Pope shortly afterwards as St. Thomas of Canterbury, he became the most popular of English saints. Dedicated to him there stand to-day within the county three churches, those at Elsfield and Goring and St. Thomas's Church at Oxford, while a chapel in the Church of St. John the Baptist at Burford is also dedicated to his memory.

Several important Councils were held in the county during Henry II's reign.

In 1160 there was a Council at Oxford, held against the

Waldenses. This was followed by another in 1166, when thirty Waldenses were arraigned for holding doctrines contrary to those generally accepted. Their answers brought a fearful punishment upon them : they were branded on the forehead, stripped naked to the waist, and whipped out of the town.

In 1177 a General Council was again held at Oxford, at which the king made his youngest son, John, Lord of Ireland.

In 1184 the king was at Woodstock, and there established his assize of Woodstock, at which were set forth the rules regulating the hunting in the royal forest. The next year we find Parliament again at Oxford, and then, in May of 1186, a Council was held at Eynsham, for eight days, which the king attended, each day going from and returning to his palace at Woodstock.

Twice during his father's reign was Prince Henry, the king's second son, crowned with his father as joint ruler, and in 1175 we find the two kings holding an ecclesiastical council at Oxford, the chief business of which was to appoint a new bishop to the see of Norwich, the chosen candidate being John of Oxford, who was a clergyman officiating at Court. Although thus early sharing in the kingship, Prince Henry never succeeded to the sole rule : he died before his father, and thus Richard, the Lion Heart, became the king's immediate successor.

III. Richard Cœur de Lion

Born at Beaumont Palace, where the Carmelite Friars subsequently showed with much pride the room of his birth, Richard does not seem to have shown particular interest in the county in later years ; in the very first year of his reign he set out with such forces as he could get together for the Third Crusade. The resources for his expedition were obtained in many and questionable ways ; among other things charters were granted to towns on payment of a suitable sum of money to the royal treasury. Such a charter Oxford obtained during a brief visit

which the king paid to the city immediately before his departure. By it, Oxford was to have the same laws, customs, and liberties, which were enjoyed by London. The Oxford Gild Merchant was established with full rights, and the town was allowed to levy whatever taxes and dues were considered necessary. A mayor and two aldermen were also granted to the city, and the mayor was to have the privilege of acting as sub-butler under the Lord Mayor of London at the Coronation feast. This interesting privilege was exercised for the last time at the coronation of Charles II, although the corporation still asserts the right of the mayor to the office. At the coronation of King Edward VII, for instance, the claim was once more put forward, but the omission of the royal banquet from the ceremonies prevented any definite expression as to whether the Mayor of Oxford may still expect the honour of acting as sub-butler.

One of the first things that Richard did on his return home was to constitute by charter arrangements by which the brilliant military displays of the tournament could be legally carried out. Near to Mixbury, and on the road leading to Oxford, is a place now known as Bears Green, the name being probably a survival of Bayard's or Bay Horse Green. This was one of the spots chosen for the lists, and it is not at all unlikely that its selection for the purpose was due to the influence of Roger d'Ivry's descendants, who still lived at the neighbouring castle of Beaumont. How often these exciting contests were held there it is impossible to say ; one other is recorded in 1249, but popular opinion gradually put an end to displays which were often accompanied by unnecessary loss of life.

In 1193 a Council was held at Oxford for the purpose of considering the best means of raising the 100,000 marks demanded by the Duke of Austria for the king's release. Of that heavy sum it is said that Oxford itself contributed no small portion. Eventually the king was set free, but the few months he spent in England gave him little opportunity of visiting his faithful subjects. One visit, however, he did manage to pay to our county, according to the following record :

" 1194. In this year Richard I visited Woodstock on April 13th, soon after he had returned to England upon his ransom being paid."

Five years later this warlike king received his mortal wound at Chaluz in Normandy, and his brother John succeeded to the throne for which he had so long been intriguing.

IV. John and Henry III

Like his brother, John was Oxfordshire born, but, unlike that restless monarch, he paid visits frequent and prolonged to the county ; sometimes he would be at Beaumont Palace, but more often at Woodstock. From his " Itinerary ", it appears that he was at the royal manor for some portion of the time in eleven out of the seventeen years of his reign. Allured by the pleasures of the chase he not only ranged through the pleasant glades of Woodstock Park, but extended his expeditions further westward to Wychwood Forest. To add to his comfort in these wider journeys he had built a hunting lodge at Langley, in the heart of the forest, some three miles north-east of Burford, and there the Court is recorded to have met in 1204. As a royal residence Langley remains on record to the time of James I ; but to-day, only the smallest ruins are left to mark what was once a forest home of many of our kings.

The reign of John, void of all good works, left little by which his name may be remembered in the county. He returned to Woodstock after signing Magna Charta, and in the following year met an untimely end at Newark.

To the vacant throne succeeded his son, Henry III, a child of nine years of age, who for the first two years of his minority was under the protectorship of the Earl of Pembroke, and thence till 1227, under the guidance of Hubert de Burgh. In that year he assumed the government, and continued a reign conspicuous for the weakness of his character and his rule.

During this long and not altogether uneventful reign, Oxford appears to have been the scene of no less than fifteen Councils or Parliaments. Two of these deserve notice; the first, in 1227, when the king declared his intention of taking the power into his own hands, and the second, in 1258, the so-called "Mad Parliament", when the Provisions of Oxford were drawn up. The long years of misrule, and the dependence of the king on the unwise advice of vicious favourites, had rendered these extreme measures necessary, just as, forty years before, the power of his father had to be curbed by the restrictions of the Great Charter. In the main the Provisions of Oxford required that a committee of twenty-four should be appointed to reform grievances, that there should be a permanent council of fifteen to advise the king, and that three parliaments should be held each year. From Oxford in 1263, the king's brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, supported by many of the barons, issued his final request to the king to observe the Provisions of 1258 before they appealed to arms.

Beyond the occasional Councils which were held at Oxford during the reigns of the Edwards, and the favour which these monarchs still continued to bestow on the royal manor of Woodstock, few important events happened in the county during the remaining period of the Plantagenet kings. Seven colleges were founded at Oxford during that time, one of which, Queen's, had been established by Queen Philippa's chaplain, Eglesfield, and dedicated by him to his royal mistress.

V. The Knights Templars and Hospitallers

There is one feature in the history of the period, however, which must not be omitted. From the later Saxon times and onward the country had seen the establishment of numerous religious houses, which, as time passed by, grew immensely in wealth and power. Then came the fiery and fervent preaching of Peter the Hermit, which

induced thousands of the bravest of England's sons to join the expeditions which had for their object the deliverance of the Holy City from the hands of the Moslem ; and not only were there these warlike demonstrations, but thousands of more peaceable people undertook the pilgrimage in the hope that the performance of such a sacred task might secure for them eternal happiness. In days when travelling was arduous and difficult these pilgrimages were fraught with no small danger to life and limb, and then arose that remarkable body of men, the Knights Templars.

Old Queen's College

Founded as a military and religious order in 1119, the primary purpose of the order was the protection of the defenceless pilgrims travelling to and from the Holy City. The charitable purpose to which they had devoted themselves made them the object of large endowments all over Europe, out of which preceptories were established throughout Christian lands, each under the ultimate control of the Grand Master of the Order, and owning allegiance to none but the Pope himself. Two such preceptories were founded in our own county ; one originally established at Temple Cowley, and afterwards removed to Sandford, where a por-

tion of the chapel at the Temple Farm still marks the site; and the other a Templar house for sisters at Gosford, near Kidlington. The large amount of wealth which they were able to accumulate, and their freedom from any authority save that of the Pope, made them the object of envy and suspicion to the monarchs of Europe. Grave charges of misconduct were brought against them, and in spite of strenuous declarations of their innocence, which they maintained through torture and martyrdom, the order was finally suppressed in 1312, and their houses and goods handed over to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem.

VI. The Last of the Plantagenets

And now to return to the story of the last four Plantagenet kings, so far as it concerns Oxfordshire. Of the four, Edward I and Edward III kept their subjects too well employed in foreign conquests to allow for any opportunity of intrigue and rebellion at home. Both Edward II and Richard II, however, were men of a different stamp. The former surrendered himself largely to the influence of indiscreet and mischievous advisers, and, in particular, to Piers Gaveston. One means of pleasantry and amusement was found in the nicknames which Gaveston was wont to apply indiscriminately to the nobles attending the king's court, and, among others, he had bestowed upon the Earl of Warwick the sobriquet of "The Black Dog of Arden", an insult which Warwick never forgave. Arrested in 1312, Gaveston was handed over to the custody of the Earl of Pembroke, who proposed to take him to Wallingford Castle. On the way thither the calvacade stopped at Deddington Castle, where the Earl left his prisoner in charge of the guards, while he himself went to spend the night at an adjoining village. Warwick, however, thirsting for revenge, discovered the retreat, and early in the following morning, before the return of the Earl of Pembroke, took possession of the prisoner. In vain did Gaveston plead upon his knees for mercy. "The

Witch's son," declared Warwick, "should feel the Black Dog's teeth," and hurrying him away from Deddington to Warwick, hanged him on Blacklow Hill.

To an untimely death also came his master, Edward II, in 1327, while a similar fate in all probability befell that equally unfortunate king, Richard II. Richard had the misfortune to come to the throne early in life, and, like his

Radcot Bridge (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

great-grandfather, Edward II, yielded himself to the flattering but injudicious guidance of self-seeking favourites, among whom Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was one of the most conspicuous. Impeached by the Lords Appellant, De Vere first fled the country, but returning, put himself at the head of the King's forces in the west, and prepared to march on London. At Radcot Bridge, however, where the road from Burford to Faringdon crosses the river, he was met by the Duke of Gloucester, and here,

on a cold December day, a sharp engagement was fought. Taken in the rear, De Vere's forces were soon overcome, and he himself only saved his life by plunging into the water and swimming down stream in full armour till he reached a place of safety, from which he ultimately escaped to the continent.

Eleven years later his master resigned the crown to Henry Bolingbroke, and with him came to an end a line of kings whose influence in the country for good or for ill was by no means small or unimportant.

Old Man's Weir, Lower Radcot

CHAPTER VI

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE OXFORDSHIRE TOWNS

I. Town Life in the Middle Ages

In order to understand properly the history of our towns and villages in the Middle Ages it will be necessary to form an idea of the conditions under which our forefathers lived. In these days of settled civilization we live securely in our houses free from all alarm, but in the turbulent times of the Normans and Plantagenets, when baron fought against baron and outlaws gained a livelihood by plunder, no community was free from the fear of occasional attack by armed forces.

Thus the villages often grew up under the protection of some powerful lord's castle, while many of the towns, and particularly those which occupied important military positions, were surrounded by walls. In the walled cities the area enclosed was comparatively small, and within these narrow limits houses were crowded together with little regard for convenience; the streets were narrow, and the overhanging storeys did much to shut out light and air. These were the days, too, when sanitation was entirely wanting, when the streets were unpaved and side walks unheard of, when the only drainage was an open gutter running down the middle of the street to serve as the common receptacle for the refuse from the houses.

In the busiest parts of the town the ground floor of the house was usually the shop, across the unglazed window of which, and projecting into the street, ran the counter where the shopkeeper displayed the goods and wares which he offered for sale to the passer by. Over-

head there swung in the breeze a sign, which served to indicate the occupation of the tenant or to act both as name and number to his house. When night fell and shutters were closed a grim darkness settled upon the scene, broken here and there at long intervals by the dim light of oil lamps suspended on strings across the streets, or by the occasional flicker of the watchman's lantern as he patrolled his beat.

Nor were the insides of the houses one whit more advanced in their standard of comfort and convenience. The floors, paved with stone or hard beaten mud, were strewn with rushes for the greater comfort of the occupants, but one has only to picture the dogs occupying common quarters with their masters, and receiving scraps cast indiscriminately from the table, to realize the dirty condition to which this covering was soon reduced. When the time for renewal came it not infrequently happened that only the surface rushes were removed, while the lower layers were left in their filthy state to breed disease and death. With candles costing two shillings a pound according to the present value of money, daylight was invaluable. Men rose at dawn, dined at ten, supped at five or thereabouts, and went to bed as soon as the falling night put an end to their labours.

II. Trade and Commerce

For the better protection of their interests tradesmen and artisans alike banded themselves together into craft guilds, controlled by their own by-laws and governed by officials whose duty it was, to admit all duly qualified candidates, to receive admission fees, to regulate the prices charged, and to exercise proper supervision over the quality of the work performed. Entrance to the guild was generally secured by a full apprenticeship, and after the candidate had satisfied the warden that he was competent in his trade, although admission, in the case of outsiders, could be obtained by purchase, and in some cases by right of birth. Fostered by the Church, the guilds in their turn assisted in its support ; most of them

had chapels set apart for their own use in various parish churches, to which they repaired on festal days for the celebration of Mass, and before the altar of which they kept candles burning. Thus the crafts became strongly organized bodies, and even the prentice lads at times were a force to be reckoned with. Over all was the more powerful merchant guild, exercising a general control over the craft guilds, and regulating their various interests, for no member of one guild was allowed to undertake work which belonged to the sphere of another, nor to invade its privileges. In addition there were also social and religious guilds, the former providing opportunities for feasting and jollity among the members, the latter for the purpose of maintaining priests to pray for the members of the guild while living, and to say Mass for their souls when dead.

Not only were the members of the various craft guilds prohibited from interfering with each other's trade, but in most towns the trades themselves were also located in separate districts. A similar rule, too, applied in the public markets, where stalls and booths were arranged in groups according to the goods which their owners offered for sale.

Alongside of the merchant guilds there gradually grew up, under a mayor and aldermen, an organized system of municipal government, the rights and privileges of which were secured by charters of incorporation received from the king. To the municipality, in addition to its other privileges, was given the responsibility of controlling the public markets and fairs, and of regulating the prices at which the necessaries of life should be sold. For the latter purpose there was held at regular intervals what was known as the "Assize of Bread and Beer", when the mayor fixed the prices at which all brewers, bakers, and victuallers were to sell these commodities. First of all a jury was obtained to ascertain the prices of the various qualities of wheat and malt on the previous market day, and then, in accordance with their finding, the mayor fixed the price of beer and the weights of the penny loaf according to quality.

But it was the fairs and markets which were of supreme importance in those days, benefiting, as they did, all who were interested in their maintenance, from the king who granted the privilege to the lowliest purchaser at the stalls. To-day, the produce of far-off lands streams into our country by means of swift steamships, to be distributed by even swifter trains, filling the shops with goods and bringing plenty to our very doors. The great industrial centres of our own country had no existence then, and you will readily understand that there were no grocers or confectioners, no clothiers or boot shops, no ironmongers or crockery shops, such as are found by the dozen to-day in our large towns.

To return to the beginning of things then, the communities which congregated together under the shelter of the lord's castle or around the monastery felt the need of some means of supplying themselves with the commodities which their own industry could not provide. The lord of the manor or the abbot of the monastery would then secure from the king a charter granting to him the right to hold a market or fair, for which privilege he paid a substantial price, receiving in return the fees which the market people were prepared to pay for permission to retail their goods. Now a fair to-day is suggestive of very little more than fun and merry-making, but in those far away times it meant real, serious business ; it meant the opportunity of securing the necessaries of life, and of disposing in turn of the articles which the industry of the artisan or the toil of the countryman had provided. Thus we find fairs arranged at appropriate periods for the sale of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, cheese, fruit, hardware, indeed all the commodities which the farmer and trader wished to sell and the townsfolk wanted to buy. There, too, was the itinerant doctor, selling his nostrums which were guaranteed to cure any ill on earth ; the strolling player, bent on collecting a crowd to listen to his lays ; the tumbler and the acrobat ; the palmer and the beggar ; the pedlar with his pack and his glib persuasive tongue, all intent on turning an honest penny. To the larger fairs

came travelling traders from all over the country, welcome not only for the goods they had to sell, but also for the news which they brought from far and wide. Many of these merchants, by virtue of the charter of the town to which they belonged, were exempt from tolls charged in the provincial fairs, in illustration of which we may quote a letter, dated 1364, from the Mayor and Aldermen of London to the bailiffs and good folk of the town of Burford desiring them "to restore the distress they had taken from the merchandize of William Attehale, citizen of London, for stallage, and to cease to demand such toll in future, inasmuch as all citizens of London are and ought to be quit of all manner of customs throughout the king's dominion by charter".

The important position which these fairs held in the business life of the community may be in some measure estimated from the fact that shopkeepers were often compelled to close their shops during the time of the fair. This restriction was due no doubt in part to the desire of the authorities to secure the greatest possible advantage from the fees paid by the stallholders, and partly also to prevent any undue competition with the vendors of merchandize. At these times it was no uncommon thing for the mayor to surrender his authority to the person whose privilege it was to hold the fair, while the town courts would be closed in favour of the Pie-Powder Court, a summary court of justice, so called because the suitors were usually the dusty footed (pied poudré) country folk who had complaints to make.

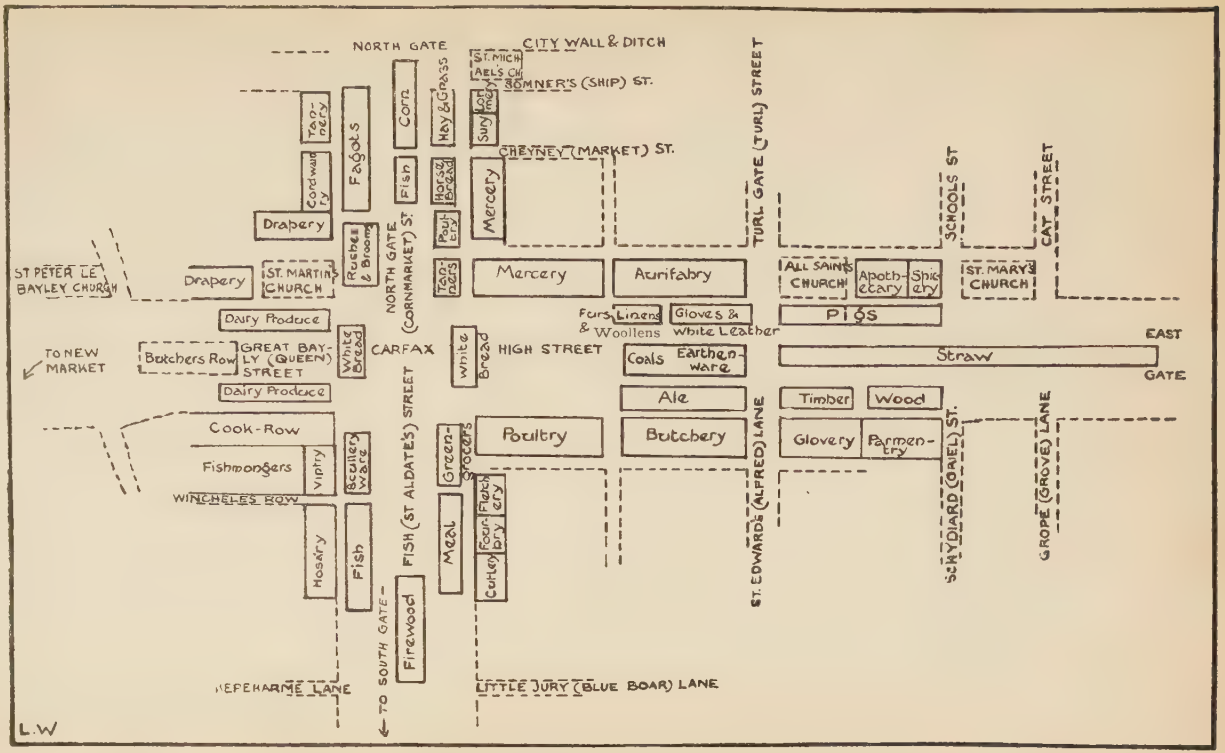
III. The Incorporation of Oxford

Having endeavoured in some measure to realize the kind of life which our ancestors lived, let us now try to understand more particularly the development of the towns within the borders of our own county. And first of all we must begin with Oxford, by far the most important town from earliest times.

Oxford received its first privileges towards civic free-

dom in the reign of Henry I. Before that time it had been part of the royal demesne, paying its dues directly to the king's officers, but Henry, always interested in the neighbourhood, let to the city the right of collecting these dues for a yearly payment of £63 5*s*. This seems a small sum to us, but it must be remembered that its purchasing power in those times was at least ten times as great if not much more, and probably represents a sum equal to £1,000 of our money. Later on, and sometime just before 1161, Henry II granted an important charter to the city, confirming to the citizens all the advantages which they held previously, and in addition granting them privileges similar to those held by the citizens of London. Such a method of acquiring a charter was frequently adopted, the smaller towns endeavouring to secure advantages similar to those of the larger towns, and later on we shall see that one of the charters of Burford secured for it privileges similar to those enjoyed by Oxford. It would be impossible to enumerate all the charters granted to the city by successive sovereigns, but a document of Edward II in 1319 is of special interest since it locates the various positions in the streets to be occupied by different traders at the markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The regulations were issued with the express purpose of avoiding confusion in the merchandizing of strangers, and to prevent those who were not free of the guild from thrusting out those who were.

"The sellers of straw and hay shall stand with their teams in the middle of High Street between East Gate and All Saints' Church. The sellers of faggots in carts and waggons shall stand between Oriel College Lane and the Swan Inn (King Edward's Street); the sellers of timber between the Swan Inn and St. Edward's Lane (Alfred Street). The sellers of hogs and swine shall stand between St. Mary's and All Saints' Church; the beer and ale sellers between St. Edward's Lane and the Chequer Inn; sellers of coals and earthenware by St. Edward's Lane on the north side of the High Street. The glove merchants and whitawyers (dressers of white



MARKET STANDS

leather) shall stand between All Saints' Church and the house next the Mitre Inn; the furriers, linen, and woollen drapers by the two-faced pump (probably at Carfax where the Conduit stood later); the tanners between Carfax and Somner's Inn (near the Golden Cross in Cornmarket Street). Sellers of butter, cheese, milk, and eggs shall stand from Carfax Corner towards the Old Bayly (Queen Street), the sellers of hay and grass at the pillory, the corn-sellers between the Golden Cross and Bocardo" in commemoration of which the name Cornmarket Street still survives.

In addition to these fixed localities for the market stands the permanent tradesmen also had definite districts assigned to them. The Spicery and Vintnery lay to the south of St. Martin's Church, while the goldsmiths had their shops in All Saints' parish. Fish Street, now St. Aldate's, extended from Carfax to Folly Bridge, and Butcher Row, now Queen Street, contained the butchers' stalls. Outside the walls, Broad Street was Horsemonger Lane, so named from the horse fair held there, while the guild of weavers had twenty-three looms working at Parry's Mead, which was situated where Magdalen College Grove now stands.

Oxford does not seem to have been so fully provided with charter fairs as some of the remoter towns in the county, a fact due probably to its having two markets per week and also to the larger number of shops available for the purchase of goods. Of them all, St. Giles's Fair and Gloucester Green Fair alone survive; St. Clement's Fair has practically died a natural death in recent years, while only your fathers or grandfathers will remember the cake stall in St. Aldate's, the sole survival of St. Frideswide's fair, once the most important in the city. Those that remain, not only in the city, but in the county as well, have travelled far from their original purpose and now serve mainly for amusement and pleasure.

A further indication of the importance of a town in the Middle Ages is shown by its inclusion or omission from the list of towns selected to send members to Parliament. What is considered by us to be a matter of

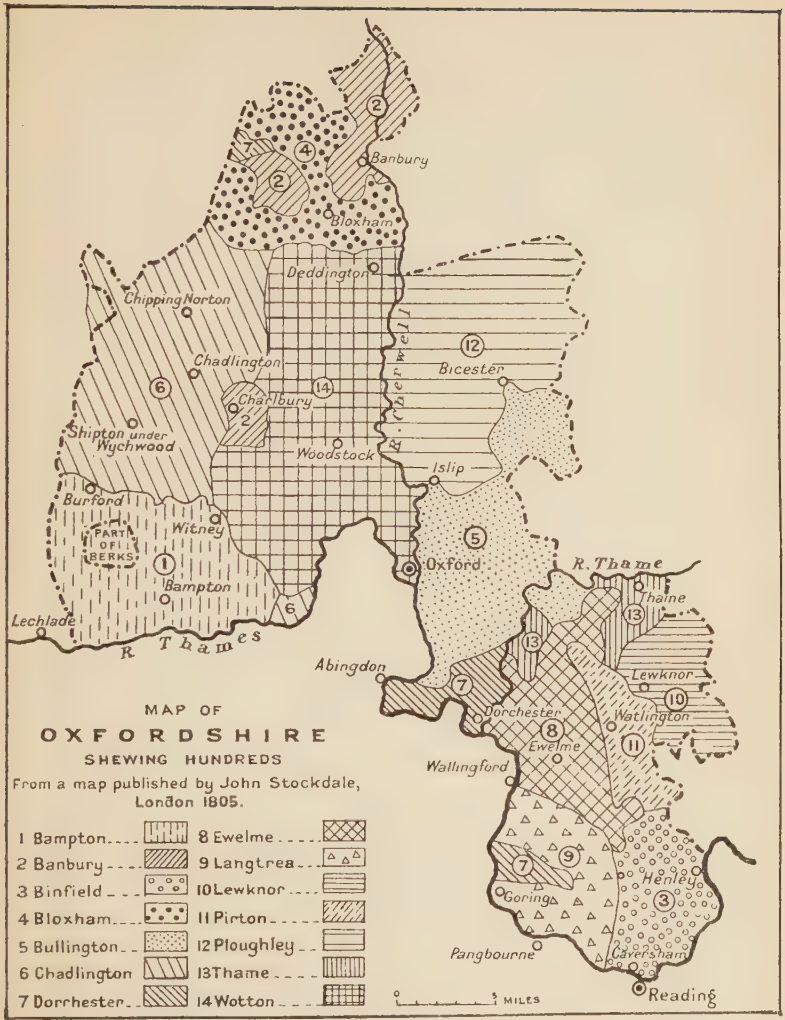
privilege was often looked upon by our forefathers as a serious burden. The only charge to the constituency now is the cost of conducting the election, whereas in these early parliaments the members had to be maintained while discharging their official duties. Thus town members received from their constituency two shillings per day, and county members four shillings, and it is this charge which probably accounts for the reluctance with which some of the smaller towns responded to the writs. There can be little doubt that Oxford was among the first towns invited to send members to parliament; but unfortunately there is no record of its doing so till thirty years later, when Thomas de Sowy and Andrew de Pyrie were elected as burgesses for the city. And here, for the time being, we must leave Oxford, remembering that she will appear again as the leading character in the drama to be played out on the stage of the county history.

IV. The Rise of the Market Towns

Now let us turn our attention to the other towns in the county, and before we discuss the development of the individual towns it will be as well if we try to understand in some measure the conditions out of which they sprang. First of all, look carefully at your map and see how the towns are situated. Beginning with Banbury on the north we have Chipping Norton, Burford, and Bampton on the western border, and Deddington, Bicester, Thame, Watlington and Henley on the eastern, all pretty nearly an equal distance from each other, while the middle of the area is occupied by Charlbury, Witney, Woodstock and Oxford. On the whole, the towns are about as evenly distributed as they can be, each being distant from its neighbours anywhere from eight to twelve miles. How different is this from the thickly planted towns in the Black Country or the Potteries; in Yorkshire or Lancashire, where they stand so close as often to merge into one another! There, as

you know, they have been called into existence by the industries developed in the neighbourhood, and that is exactly the case with the Oxfordshire towns. It is the agricultural industry to which they owe their existence, and, as a matter of fact, every one of them, with the exception of Oxford and Woodstock, had its origin in an agricultural community. Thus we find them evenly distributed, each so situated that its markets and fairs may serve the adjacent districts without entering unduly into competition with its neighbours. Not, of course, that any site was arbitrarily selected at any particular time; they grew up naturally as local convenience and the advantages of the position made themselves manifest.

It is to our Saxon forefathers that we owe pretty largely the political divisions into which the county is divided at the present day; the Normans found an organized form of society throughout the country, and merely adapted it for their own purposes. The sub-division of the country into counties probably commenced in the time of King Alfred and his immediate successor Edward the Elder; but before that time, there was a smaller division called the Hundred, a division which in name at least has remained to our own day. Look at the notices in the porch of your church and you will see that in some of them the parish is described as situated in a certain Hundred. Now when the Saxon invaders took possession of the country they appropriated the land to themselves, each man taking possession of a portion sufficient to maintain himself and his family. Such a portion was called a " hide ", the Saxon word originally denoting that extent of land which could be enclosed by an ox's hide cut into one long strip. Precisely what area a hide was it is difficult to say, but it is generally estimated as being from eighty to a hundred and twenty acres. Now when the question arose of assessing taxes over the whole district it was found convenient to combine adjacent hides for the purpose, and this was commonly done by grouping them into *hundreds*, hence the name. In our own county a hundred and twenty hides went to



B.V. Oxfordshire, Oxford, 1908

the hundred, thus constituting a long English hundred of six score instead of five. You are already familiar in your weights and measures with this method of giving an overplus, and even the gardener who sells plants will give a hundred and twenty for a hundred.

At the time of the Domesday Survey there were certainly not less than twenty hundreds in the county, but combinations among them ultimately reduced the number to fourteen as it now stands. Beginning at the extreme south of the county there are the hundreds of Binfield, Langtree, Dorchester, Ewelme, Pyrton, Lewknor, Thame, Bullingdon, Bampton, Ploughley, Wootton, Chadlington, Bloxham, and Banbury. To this day the hundreds are important divisions of the county, being generally used for Poor Law administration, and as Petty Sessional and County Court divisions.

Many of our towns and villages still contain silent witnesses of the rough and ready methods by which justice was administered in the past. There were the stocks in which the rogue and the vagabond, the drunkard and the peace-breaker, might be confined, seated with feet and sometimes hands firmly fixed, exposed to the public gaze until the punishment was complete. Few places were without this instrument of correction, and they are still to be seen, sometimes in the village street, as at Glympton and Stanton Harcourt, or stowed away for curiosities, as at Woodstock. Then, too, there was the whipping-post, at which thrashings were administered in public, and that refinement of torture, the pillory, where the offender stood with head and hands protruding through the holes of the transverse board, a mark for all the missiles which an excited crowd cared to hurl. Happily these barbarous implements of torture have long since passed away, and gone with them, too, is the cucking-stool, that ingenious see-saw arrangement by which the village scold was dipped against her will beneath the water of the nearest pond or stream. Even the village pound is almost entirely gone, the enclosure in which stray cattle were confined until the owner secured their liberation by payment of a fine.

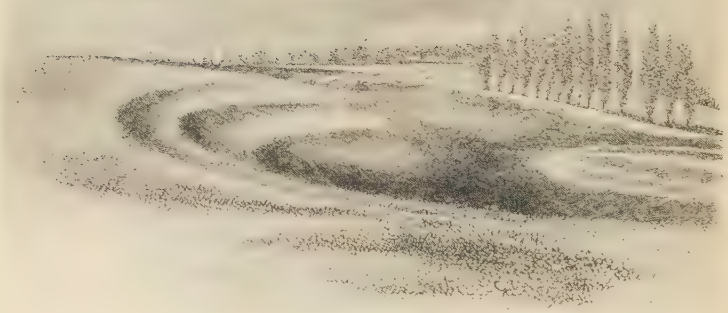
But now we must revert once more to the more serious business of considering the larger towns which developed out of the country communities. To different people different methods, even in agriculture; in some parts of the hundred the land would be cultivated according to one system, in others the system might be entirely different. Where a number of landholders occupying adjacent hides adopted the same method of cultivating their land, the area so cultivated became known as a *vill* or *tun*, and you will have no difficulty in finding many towns and villages in your own county whose names bear the latter affix. Many of these areas remained small and unimportant, but others which were able to secure, through the influence of some powerful lord or religious house, the privilege of holding markets, gradually grew into importance as market towns. Industries were developed in them, and with the industries came the merchant and craft guilds, securing for the members a stability and influence which enabled them to carry on their trade to the advantage of the community and with profit to themselves.

V. Banbury

In discussing the early history of the Oxfordshire towns, let us begin at the extreme north with Banbury, a town which now ranks as second only to Oxford in importance. To the juvenile mind the name of Banbury is no doubt most intimately connected with the Banbury Cake, but Banbury has very much more to be proud of than the mere 'zeal, cakes, and ale', to which an old proverb attributes its fame. That the early Dobūni favoured the spot is obvious from the remains of the many defensible positions which they erected in the vicinity. Thus within an easy run of the town are to be found camps at Nadbury, Madmarston, Tadmarton, and Ilbury, on the one side, and at Rainsborough and Arberry on the other. Where the Britons congregated in force, there the Romans were bound to follow, if their supremacy was to be in any way complete,

and they, too, have left traces behind them. The Roman coins dug up from time to time give unmistakable evidence of their settlement in the district, for where there is a finder there must also have been a loser.

But the most interesting of all the Roman remains is that strange old amphitheatre, situated just round the turn of the Bloxham-road, which many of you know by



Roman Amphitheatre, Banbury

the name of the Bear-garden. The houses in front have no doubt encroached upon the arena, but it is not difficult to imagine the chariots tearing round, and the gladiators struggling in grim combat, while the spectators applauded from the terraces above.

At the Domesday the Manor of Banesberie is described as held by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, and he it was who, in 1125, built on the north-east side of the town the castle which subsequently figured so largely in the

Civil War. The growth of the town was no doubt similar to that of Oxford, the town life developing under the shelter of the castle walls. Bishop Alexander and his successors frequently inhabited the castle, and to find provisions for the large retinue which accompanied them on their journeys, it was necessary to have a properly organized market. The establishment of a market, then, was one of the Bishop's first duties, and took place probably as soon as the castle was habitable. That it soon grew into importance is clear from the fact that in 1138 the Bishop was able to give " one hundred shillings yearly out of his toll in Bannebiri " to the newly founded monastery at Godstow. Sundry charters of succeeding monarchs confirmed to the Bishops of Lincoln the privilege of holding the market, of which the following, granted by Henry III, is typical.

" Henry, King of England, &c., to his Justices, &c., of Oxenefordscire greeting. Know ye that I have given and granted for the love of God and on the petition of Robert (Grosseteste) Bishop of Lincoln to the Church of St. Mary at Lincoln for ever that he have his Market in his town of Banneberi every week on Thursday freely and quietly and honourably after such customs as other markets have throughout England. Witnesses . . . at Lincoln."

After the market came the fairs, for, while the former provided the necessary commodities of life, it was at the latter that the thrifty housewife must lay in her supply of pepper, ginger, sugar, and other rare stores, her silk, linen, and fabrics, which could only be obtained from the merchants travelling through the country from fair to fair.

The growing importance of these fairs can be understood from the fact that in 1327 the Bishop found it necessary to petition the King for permission to extend the time of his two fairs held in Banbury, the one on Ascension Day and the preceding day, the other on the Thursday and Friday of Whitsun-week. The petition was granted and the period of each fair extended by eight days, subject, be it observed, to such extensions not proving injurious to neighbouring fairs. In 1698 there

were five fairs in existence, and by 1836 they had increased to thirteen.

As in most country towns, there were fairs of special importance just before and after Old Michaelmas Day, when the farm servants attended to offer themselves for service during the coming year. Writing in 1677 Dr. Plot says, " At Banbury and Bloxham, it has always been the custom, at set times of the year, for young people to meet to be hired as servants ; which meeting at Banbury they call the Mop, at Bloxham the Statute, where they all sort themselves, and carry their badges according as they are qualified ; the carters standing in one place with their whips and the shepherds in another with their crooks."

In Banbury there was another fair on Old St. Luke's Day, called the " Runaway Fair ", when servants who found the situations they had taken at Old Michaelmas not to their liking, presented themselves again. All these fairs, regarded as business enterprises, have now become a thing of the past ; the periodical cattle markets suffice for the sale of animals, the shops keep us constantly supplied with necessaries and luxuries, while the advertisement columns of the newspapers provide a regular means of furnishing servants with masters and masters with servants.

The religious foundations of Banbury are neither numerous nor important. The Hospital of St. John the Baptist existed at least as far back as 1209, and was situated on the east side of South Bar Street. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries its net revenue was about £15, and it was consequently suppressed with the smaller religious houses, but by whom it was acquired there seems to be no evidence to show. Of the buildings nothing now remains, although the site is identified as that occupied by the house known as St. John's Priory. Another foundation, interesting mainly from its charitable purpose, was the Hospital for Lepers, dedicated to St. Leonard, which stood on the east side of Banbury Bridge, in what was then the hamlet of Nethercot. The site is still known as " the 'Spital ", and " the 'Spital Farm ", but no portion of the ancient building remains.

The earliest indications of civic life in Banbury appear in a charter under the hand of Edward III, in 1328, by which "the good men of the town of Bannebury" are empowered to levy toll on all goods coming into the town during a period of seven years for the purpose of providing funds to pave the streets. The document is long, and important mainly for its enumeration of the various kinds of articles which came to market in the Middle Ages. It would be interesting to know, however, whether it was for the purpose of collecting the dues authorized by this charter that the gates, or bars, which formerly stood at the main entrances to the town were erected. Their history is very obscure, but the absence of walls and fortifications other than those of the Castle would seem to indicate that they were not intended for defensive purposes. North Bar, from which the present street is named, stood near the Tanyard, south of the corner of Warwick Road; the Cole Bar closed the old Adderbury and Oxford Road, which entered the town by way of Broad Street, before the making of the turnpike road; St. John's Bar spanned the entrance from Chipping Norton, at the spot where Monument Street now enters South Bar; Sugarford Bar stood in West Street, and the Bridge Gate on the old bridge over the Cherwell.

It was in the first year of Queen Mary's reign that Banbury received a charter incorporating it as a free borough under a Bailiff, twelve Aldermen, and twelve Burgesses. Among other things it granted to the corporation all the profits of the fairs and markets, on the condition that they paid the sum of £6 13*s.* 4*d.* annually to the Queen's Exchequer. Henceforth, too, Banbury was to be represented in Parliament by "a discreet Burgess of the said Borough", a privilege which it continued to hold until the Redistribution Act of 1885. Subsequent charters were granted in the reigns of James I, Charles II, and George I, under the last of which it continued to be governed until the passing of the Municipal Reform Act in 1835.

Banbury, as I have already said, was proverbially noted, amongst other things, for its zeal. At the Reforma-

tion, Puritanism seems to have taken a strong hold on the citizens, who viewed with uneasiness the attempts of Roman Catholics to revive shows and pageants at the close of Elizabeth's reign. It was during one of their periodical bursts against anything pertaining to "Papistry" that the town crosses were destroyed, and among them the famous Banbury Cross immortalized in the old nursery rhyme. The town has been singularly unfortu-

The Old Church, Banbury

nate in the destruction of its monuments of the past; first the cross, later the castle, and last of all its fine old church. The original church is said to have been built by Bishop Alexander in Norman times, and continued to serve its purpose until its demolition in 1790. For some thirty years before the condition of the fabric had been under consideration, the townsfolk as a whole thinking it unsafe, and desiring that it should be rebuilt; and in the end they had their way. But the old church stood out stoutly in spite of its reputed weakness, and it was not till fire and

gunpowder had done their worst that one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in the county was reduced to ruins.

VI. Chipping Norton

Twelve miles south-west of Banbury, and standing high on the western slope of the high ridge running parallel to

Chipping Norton Church
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

the boundary of the county, but well within it, stands the town of Chipping Norton. Looking westward across the valley, some two miles away as the crow flies, the outlying ridge on which the Rollright stones stand will be seen, beyond which the land slopes sharply down into the neighbouring county of Warwick. The long stretch of farm lands reminds us that, like most Oxfordshire towns,

Chipping Norton grew out of a village with common fields, and was at the outset essentially an agricultural community. Its importance in Norman times was greatly increased by the building of the castle, whose walls have long since passed away, but the position of which is still distinctly defined by the mounds which mark its site in the large field to the north of the church. Immediately after the Conquest the lords of the manor appear to have been the Fitz Alans of Clun, from whom, by a long succession of changes, the lordship ultimately passed by purchase into the hands of the Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough. In 1205 William Fitz Alan obtained a charter for a yearly fair, and from that time, under the protection and patronage of the Castle, the town began to develop as an important market centre. Described originally in the Domesday Survey as Nortone, its growing importance secured for it the full name of Chipping, or Market Norton, the prefix being derived from the Saxon word *céapian*, " to buy," a root which subsequently gave rise to *chepynge*, a market place, and hence the modern Chipping. As in other places, there was a steady increase in the number of statute fairs, until ultimately there were no less than fourteen in the course of the year.

Near to the famous old coaching inn, the " Chapel House ", and situated just within the angle between the Banbury and Oxford Roads, is situated the Priory Farm, the site of Over Norton Priory, founded in the twelfth century by William Fitz Alan, the lord of the manor. At the death of the last prior in 1496, in the absence of canons to elect a successor, the priory reverted to the Crown, by whom the estates were bestowed on the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. From this house they were purchased by William Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln, and by him given to the new foundation of Brasenose College at Oxford.

Chipping Norton was among the towns invited by Edward I to send representatives to parliament, a privilege which it accepted by sending two members in 1302 and 1305, but from which it was afterwards relieved on its own petition.

In the last chapter reference was made to the various types of guilds founded in the Middle Ages for mutual support and brotherhood. It is known that a religious guild existed at Chipping Norton, providing means for the maintenance of two priests, and it is more than likely that the Guild Hall in Middle Row is a relic of its existence. There is no definite reference to merchant or craft guilds, but the by-laws framed by the Corporation, which came

The Guild Hall, Chipping Norton

into force with the charter of 1607, are in many points similar to the rules generally laid down by these guilds, and appear to be adapted from some such rules previously in use. Thus the Corporation required that no one should exercise a trade within the limits of the town unless he were free of the borough, a monopoly retained by the burgesses until the passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835. Further, the Corporation appointed officials known as leather-sealers, whose duty it was "to try,

search, and examine all leather made and exposed for sale within the borough, and to seize all leather not properly tanned ". This rule is a distinct survival of the supervision by which the craft guilds secured authority over the quality of goods manufactured.

Another peculiarity of the Corporation lay in the fact that it consisted not of mayor and aldermen, as generally required in the charters of James I's reign, but of two bailiffs and fourteen burgesses, all life members, and filling up the vacancies which occurred, not by election but by co-optation. As a body they had power to fine or expel any of their number, and by the Court of Record established under the charter, possessed jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal cases within the borough.

VII. Burford

Following the line of the western heights southward, the next town of importance is Burford, nestling in a sheltered valley through which the head waters of the Windrush flow. Burford is one of the oldest towns in the county, and in its neighbourhood, as we have already seen, took place Cuthred's battle with the Mercians in 752. In the Domesday Survey the manor is described as belonging to Earl Aubrey, while in the reign of Edward II it was in the possession of the younger Hugh Despenser, one of that king's notorious favourites, who was subsequently hanged when his master was committed to Kenilworth Castle. Later on it is found to belong to the famous Earl of Warwick, the King-maker, but in the reign of Henry VIII it was granted to Edmund Harman, the royal barber or surgeon, for you must remember that in these early days of the art of healing, the barbers were surgeons as well. To this same man also, at the dissolution of the monasteries, was granted the Priory, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, about which, unfortunately, very little is known. Among the other famous men who have held the Manor must be mentioned Sir Lawrence Tanfield, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer in the reign

Burford Priory

of James I, whose splendid monument is still to be seen in the church. He it was who built the fine Elizabethan house known as the Priory, the ruins of which, interesting though they are, still represent only partially the magnificence of the original structure. At the death of Sir Lawrence Tanfield the estate passed to his grandson,

BURFORD CHURCH (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

Lord Falkland, to whose literary accomplishments and fidelity to King Charles I we shall have an opportunity of referring later. By him the Priory was sold to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, in the time of the Long Parliament, who built the chapel, on the door posts of which you can still see the inscription

"Exue calceos, nam terra est sancta."[1]

[1] Exodus, iii. 5.

The original beauty of the Priory is only to be understood now from the engravings of it which survive ; nearly half of the old building is supposed to have been pulled down in 1808, and what was allowed to remain is probably much altered.

More beautiful even than the Priory is the magnificent old church, one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical

The Tolsey, Burford

architecture in the county, but to appreciate its charm you must see it for yourself.

Under the patronage of such a distinguished line of lords of the manor, it is not to be wondered that between the reign of Edward III and George II Burford received no less than sixteen charters of incorporation, one of which extends to it all the privileges of the City of Oxford. Thus we have Oxford copying London in its charter and

Burford copying Oxford. This ancient corporation was, however, dissolved by Act of Parliament in 1863. Among other evidences of its importance in early times may be noticed the fact that it was one of the earliest towns to receive a chartered guild merchant. It had, too, its markets and fairs, and there still stands in the High Street that picturesque old building, the Tolsey, at which the lord of the manor received his dues. For one session, namely in 1306, Burford sent its representative to Parliament, in the person of Thomas de Lincoln; but for reasons best known to itself it never again accepted the privilege.

VIII. Bampton

Some six miles to the south-east of Burford, and near the southern border of the county, is situated Bampton, which is mentioned on several occasions in the Saxon Chronicle. The first reference of importance occurs in 1046, when Leofric, chaplain to King Edward the Confessor, gave his lands at Bampton to the new See of Exeter, which had been formed from the Bishoprics of Crediton and Cornwall, and of which he was the first Bishop.

In Domesday, Bampton is described as forming part of the King's demesne, and paying a toll of fifty shillings annually for a market, a fact which indicates that at that time it held a position of no small importance. In an Inquisition, made in the reign of Edward I, we find that "William de Valence (half-brother of Henry III) hath at Bampton a market and a fair, and that he hath the aforesaid tenement (the castle) by the gift of King Henry, father of the King Edward that now is". Later on, in the reign of Edward II, the manor belonged to his grandson and successor, Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, and in the Patent Rolls for the eighth year of that king is an entry to the effect that Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, may "crenellate", that is fortify with battlements and towers, his castle at Bampton.

The site of the castle is marked now by a few ruins only, but the statute fair is still held on August 26th and the following day. At one time this fair was famous for the large number of horses sold, and you may still see the same kind of business done, although on a smaller scale. Droves of horses and ponies are grouped together in the market place, while drovers and farmers stand by and discuss the points of the animals, as one by one they are driven furiously up and down to show their paces. Now

Bampton Castle

and again, after much haggling and discussion, you will see buyer and seller clap hands together to seal a bargain, and then retire for a while to some convenient spot to make an exchange of property on the one hand and money on the other.

In early times the parish of Bampton included, in addition to its own township, the villages or hamlets of Weald, Haddon, Lew, Aston, Chimney, Brighthampton, Shifford, Cote, and Rushey, and the spiritual needs of this

large parish were ministered to by three clergymen called "portionists", appointed by the See of Exeter, and each having a vicarage house near the church. By an order in Council, however, dated 1845, Bampton was divided into the three distinct parishes of Bampton proper, Aston, and Lew, and subsequent appointments of vicars were made to the three parishes separately.

IX. Witney

Seven miles east of Burford, on the main road to Oxford, stands the thriving town of Witney, one of the few towns in the county which has made steady progress in industrial importance since mediaeval times. Of the circumstances to which its present pre-eminence is due we shall speak later; for the present we are concerned with the story of its early years.

In 1044 the manor was in the king's hands, and was granted by him to Alfwine, Bishop of the West Saxons. Alfwine conveyed it in turn to his Bishopric of Winchester, with which See the records of the town in its early history are largely associated. The traditional story of the circumstances by which the manor passed to the See of Winchester is worthy of relation as illustrating that peculiar religious ceremony of early times known as trial by ordeal. Queen Emma, the wife of Ethelred the Unready and mother of Edward the Confessor, had been charged with an offence which she strenuously denied, and to prove her innocence volunteered to walk blindfold and barefoot among nine red-hot ploughshares. The trial was carried out in the nave of Winchester Cathedral, and as a thank-offering for its successful accomplishment, Witney, with twenty other manors, was made over by the crown to the See of Winchester. Domesday says "The Bishop of Winton holds Witenie. Stigand, Archbishop did hold it". Then follows the usual valuation of the land, from which it may be deduced that Witney at that time had a population of about 650, no small proportion when the total population of the country was not more than three

millions. From early times the Bishops of Winchester had a palace at Witney, which occupied the site of the house now known as The Mount, and here successive prelates passed a good deal of time up to the fourteenth century. Then, the building being considered unsuitable for defence, the bishop's palace was removed to Farnham in Surrey.

Among those who held the lordship of the manor was

WITNEY CHURCH (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

the notorious Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, and one of the foreign favourites of Henry III. Under his guardianship the young king, when a minor, passed some portion of his time at Witney. In the Rolls of the Hundreds, Witney is described as having a wealthy market on Thursdays, and two fairs, one on the day of the Ascension and the other on St. Leonard's Day. Its importance, too, was such as to secure for it the right of sending members to Parliament during the reigns of the Edwards.

It had two representatives in 1305, and one in 1306, and two again in 1310, 1315, 1316, and 1331. In the unhappy struggle between Edward II and his barons the neighbourhood of Witney took its part. The records are scanty, but one at least is interesting. "Here," it says, "did Aylmer, Earl of Pembroke (nicknamed Joseph the Jew by Piers Gaveston) from his castle at Bampton near by, meet Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, in solemn jousts." Why "solemn" it is difficult to surmise, unless the heavy accoutrements rendered anything but slow and ponderous movement impossible. If Witney ever has a pageant it must reproduce this interesting episode of the days of chivalry, this reminiscence of the tilt-yard and the tournament. But Witney has better things to boast of in the fact that it is the only town in the county whose early industries have remained during the course of centuries. At what date the blanket trade had its beginning it is difficult to say, but there is little doubt that when Edward III encouraged the migration of Flemish weavers to England, some of them found a home at Witney, and there laid the foundations of an industry which remains to this day.

X. Woodstock

In previous chapters we have had frequent occasion to refer to the Manor of Woodstock, and the Park, in which its royal owners delighted to hunt; and the fact that so wide a tract of country was given over to the pleasures of the chase, and protected by stringent game laws, was sufficient to prevent the development of an agricultural market town like Banbury or Chipping Norton. The origin of Woodstock was very different. In the returns known as the "Rolls of the Hundreds" for the seventh year of Edward I, the building of the town is thus referred to:—

"At the same time the lord the king (Henry II) often resided in the Manor of Woodstock for the love of a certain woman named Rosamund; and at the same time there

THE MANOR HOUSE, WOODSTOCK

was a certain void plot without the Park of the same manor, and because the men of the king were lodged too far from his manor aforesaid, the same lord the king, with the unanimous consent and counsel of his nobles, gave and granted divers portions of land of the demesne, being void plots, to divers men, for the purpose of building lodging-houses therein for the use of the men of the same king."

It was this void plot, then, just outside the Park gates, and some thirty acres in extent, which became the site of the town of New Woodstock, and when, in 1279, a survey of the town was made, it was found to contain about 137 houses. With the grant of the land the king also established a weekly market on Tuesdays, the tolls for which he himself received through his bailiff, and an annual fair, toll free, for three days at the feast of St. Matthew. In 1302 and again in 1305 the town sent members to Edward I's Parliament, but was not again represented till the reign of Queen Mary. The first charter, constituting the town a free borough, was granted by Henry VI in 1453, and by it the inhabitants were empowered to elect a mayor and sergeant-at-mace, to take the profits of the markets and tolls, and to administer justice, all of which duties had previously been performed by the king's bailiff. At the same time a Merchant Guild was conferred upon the town, whereby the monopoly of the trading within the borough was secured to those who were free of the Guild. Three other charters were granted to the borough before that conferred by Charles II in 1664, by which the town was governed until it received its latest charter in 1886.

XI. Deddington

Deddington, or Dadintone, as it is called in the Domesday Survey, has no records earlier than the Conquest, but the existence of the remains of the British camp at Ilbury, on the south-west border of the parish, shows that village life existed in the vicinity from very early times. In

Domesday Book the land is reckoned among the possessions of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, half-brother of the Conqueror, and is described as being of the annual value of sixty pounds. The chief interest of Deddington centres about its castle, which was evidently a strongly fortified place in the reign of Richard I, and from which, as we have already seen, Piers Gaveston was taken by force by the Earl of Warwick. No evidence survives as

Deddington Church
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

to the time of its destruction, but the embankment which formed the inner side of the fosse still remains, marking out an area of about six acres. The site is now happily put to a much more peaceful use, the level sward within the mounds forming an excellent recreation ground for the inhabitants of the town.

In the reign of Edward I, in 1302, and again in 1304 and 1305, Deddington sent burgesses to Parliament, but

there are no indications that it ever secured corporate rights. As at Chipping Norton, so here, there was in the Middle Ages a religious guild known as the Guild of the Holy Trinity. Incorporated in 1445, it consisted of a warden or master, to be elected annually, and of members who were to be inhabitants of Deddington, or such other persons as might be admitted by them. In accordance with its powers, the Guild founded a chantry for two chaplains to celebrate mass in the church, at the altars of the Holy Trinity and of the Blessed Virgin, on behalf of the well-being of the members of the Guild, while living, and for their souls when dead.

The most conspicuous of Deddington's sons was probably Sir Thomas Pope, who was born there about 1508. The son of a small landowner, he was educated at Banbury Grammar School and Eton, and subsequently studied law with considerable success. After holding several important positions in the State, he ultimately became Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations, to which the surrender of the monastic property was made. Among other property acquired by him was the site of Durham College, out of the remains of which, under his direction, was established Trinity College. During the reign of Edward VI he retired into private life, but Mary recalled him to the Privy Council, and for a few months entrusted to him at Hatfield the care of the Princess Elizabeth, with whom he appears to have been on friendly terms. He died from pestilence in 1588, and his body, after being interred at St. Stephen's, Walbrook, ultimately found a resting-place beneath the fine tomb which his wife erected for him and herself in Trinity College Chapel. Among his intimate friends was Lord Williams of Thame, to whose career we shall refer later.

As one of the outposts of the contending armies during the Civil War, Deddington had a fair share of the events in those troublous times. In 1634 the tower of its church fell, and the king did not hesitate to appropriate the bells to convert into cannons at his armoury at Oxford; but its chief historic memory is the visit which Charles I paid to it after the fight at Cropredy Bridge.

On the Monday following the battle, which took place on Saturday, June 29th, 1644, the royal forces marched southward to Deddington, where the king slept for the night at the Parsonage. The next morning, with colours flying, the army marched over the Cotswolds to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, on its way to Evesham.

One other interesting recollection of Deddington is recorded by Dr. Plot, in discussing the old English games, which, in 1676, were fast dying out, but some of which still lingered in the rural parts of Oxfordshire. Speaking of Tilting at the Quintain he says, "They first set a post perpendicularly into the ground, and then place a slender piece of timber on the top of it, on a spindle, with a board nailed to it on one end, and a bag of sand hanging at the other: against this board they anciently rode with spears; now, as I saw it at Deddington in this county, only with strong staves, which violently bringing about the bag of sand, if they make not good speed away, it strikes them in the neck or shoulders and sometimes perhaps knocks them from their horses; the great design of the sport being to try the agility both of horse and man, and to break the board, which whoever does is for that time accounted *princeps juventutis*."

XII. Bicester

In our consideration of the Roman occupation of the county, we have already had occasion to refer to the site of the camp at Alchester, between Wendlebury and Bicester. Tradition says that Bishop Birinus utilized the material of the deserted Roman dwellings to build and fortify a town not far distant, and which was named after its founder Burinceastre, the modern Bicester. Other derivations of the name have been suggested, but in the absence of evidence it is perhaps allowable to conclude that under the direction of the good bishop, Bicester was founded for the purpose of a frontier garrison about A.D. 634. This early settlement, which occupied that portion of the modern town now known as King's End, was

destroyed by the Danes in their devastating raid of 912. The next record of any importance occurs in the Domesday Survey, where Robert D'Oily, the Constable of Oxford, is described as holding two manors, namely Berncester and Wretchwick. With the Manor of Berncester was included that of Bigenhull, or Bignell, as it is now called, but the date at which the latter was separated is unknown.

In 1182 Gilbert Bassett, Baron of Headington, founded a monastic establishment of the Order of St. Augustine for a prior and eleven canons, which he dedicated to

Bicester Market Place

St. Edburga, the holy nun of Aylesbury. This foundation continued to exist till its surrender to Henry VIII in 1536, when its revenues were estimated at the value of £147 2*s*. 10*d*. Of all its handsome buildings nothing now remains but a portion of the structure, containing several stone mullioned windows, now known as the Priory Cottage.

On the application of John de Worthe, lord of the manor, Bignell secured a market and fair in 1377; but when, in 1440, Robert Brooks obtained letters patent for a market at Bury-end, it was discontinued. From that

time Bicester Bury-end becomes Bicester Market-end, and ever since has justified its change of name by including within its limits the most important business part of the town. Thus far the older portion of Bicester had been known as King's End, and when, in 1596, the Market End Bailwick was leased to the town by the Earl of Derby for ten thousand years, two separate townships were included in the town of Bicester.

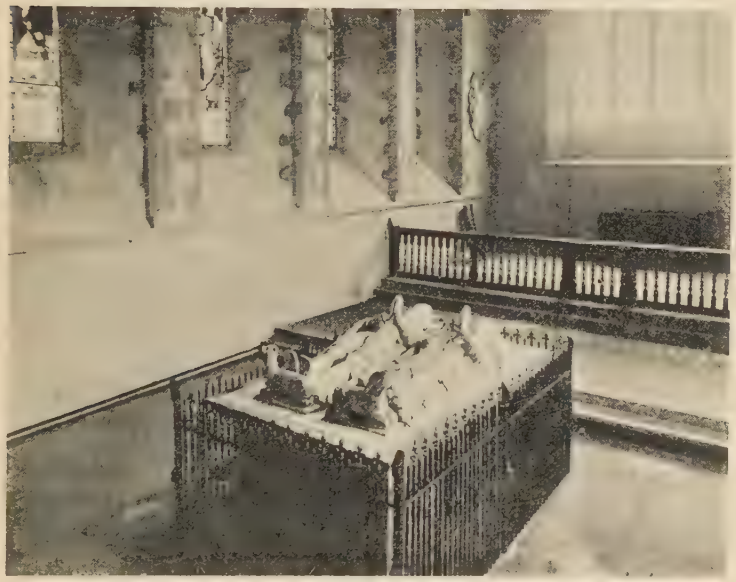
XIII. Thame

The ancient market town of Thame holds rank as one of the earliest settlements in the county, and was of sufficient importance in early times to secure mention in the Saxon Chronicle. In their marches westward the Danes would naturally avoid, as far as possible, the forest-clad slopes of the Chiltern Hills, choosing the more accessible routes to be found in the waterway of the Thames, on the south of the range, or the more level tract of open country on the north. The year 921 saw them marching from Huntingdon and erecting fortifications at Thame, a place which in those times was of sufficient importance to be called a burgh. Fifty years later the Chronicle records the death of Archbishop Osketyl at Thame. Previous to his elevation to the Archbishopric of York, Osketyl had been Bishop of Dorchester, and was permitted to retain the mansion which he held at Thame. Then again in 1009 the Danes are at their old business again, harrying the country and taking possession of a vill called Tama, the same vill, we are told, where Osketyl the bishop died. The association of Thame with the Bishopric of Dorchester continued until the See was transferred to Lincoln, after which, as the Domesday Survey tells us, "The Bishop of Lincoln holds Tama," with which See it continued to be connected till the reign of Edward VI. To the east of the town lies Thame Park, one of the oldest enclosures in the country, and probably in the possession of the Bishops of Dorchester from the time of the Saxon Heptarchy. Here, in 1138, Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln,

built an abbey, and removed to it a foundation of Cistercian monks who had previously settled at Ottendune (now Oddington) on the Otmoor. The unhealthiness of that site, however, rendered it expedient that other quarters should be obtained if possible, and the offer of Bishop Alexander was gladly accepted. From that time forward the abbey rapidly increased in wealth and importance. As an order the Cistercians were required to set an example of poverty and strict simplicity of life, and to dwell in retired places remote from the distractions of more densely populated districts. But their very retirement became a snare to them, for they gradually became indifferent to learning, and devoted their time and attention to farming and sheep-rearing. As wool-exporters, however, they soon began to amass considerable wealth, the opportunities for obtaining which were considerably enlarged by the privileges bestowed upon them by successive kings. They were exempt from the payment of tithes in all their demesne lands, they did no fealty for their possessions, and the abbey lands were exempt from scutage. Of the eighty-five Cistercian houses in England at the time of the dissolution that of Thame ranked third in wealth and importance.

With the monks, then, as near neighbours, and with the powerful Bishops of Lincoln as patrons, it can be easily understood that the progress and prosperity of Thame was assured. In the reign of King John, Bishop Hugo Willis raised it to the rank of a market town by securing a charter for a weekly market, while later on, at the end of the thirteenth century, Oliver Sutton, a later Bishop of Lincoln (1280-1299) obtained a further grant for a market to be held weekly on Tuesdays. For the next three hundred years there is little to record in the history of the town ; then, in 1540, with the dissolution of the monasteries, the abbey surrendered itself and its properties into the hands of the king, at a time when its annual revenues amounted to £256, a sum equal to at least three thousand pounds of our money. No doubt the suppression of the monasteries caused great hardships to the members of the communities and their retainers, to say nothing of

the thousands of helpless and poor folk who looked to them for charitable support. But in the end the change was not without its advantages. New men sprang up who, by fair means or foul, rose to wealth and affluence upon the ruins of the old monastic houses, many of whom devoted no small portion of their newly acquired fortunes to benevolent purposes.



Lord Williams' Tomb, Thame Church
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

Thus, as we have already seen, Sir Thomas Pope founded Trinity College, and now Lord Williams of Thame is to be the benefactor of his native town. As Sir John Williams he was one of the visitors appointed by Henry VIII to inquire into the revenues of the religious houses, and ultimately became Treasurer of the Court of Augmentations. To him most of the abbeys and monasteries in Oxfordshire surrendered, a part of his share being the abbey lands of

Thame, granted to him by Edward VI. He appears to have been several times high sheriff of the county, and probably in that capacity secured the proclamation of Mary as queen throughout Oxfordshire, in spite of the claims put forth for Lady Jane Grey. His loyalty did not go unrewarded, for Mary created him Lord Williams of Thame, and bestowed on him further marks of the royal confidence and favour. He it was who superintended the

The Old Grammar School, Thame

execution of Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer at the stake, and to him also was entrusted, together with Sir Henry Bedingfield, the custody of the Princess Elizabeth, while she was a prisoner at Woodstock. At his mansion at Rycote she was entertained on her arrival within the borders of the county, apparently in such a way as to create a favourable impression of her host's hospitality. With the change of sovereign Lord Williams retained the royal favour, and was created by Elizabeth President of the Council of the Marches of Wales, an office, however,

which he did not long enjoy. He died at Ludlow in 1559, and was buried under the splendid altar tomb which still adorns Thame Church. His benefactions to his native town consisted of the almshouses for five poor men and one poor woman, and the grammar school, which bears his name. The almshouses have been abolished, although the charity remains in another form, but the grammar school, which still exists, has produced many men who have borne illustrious names, such as Dr. Fell, the eminent divine, John Hampden, Speaker Lenthall, and Anthony à Wood.

XIV. Watlington

Watlington is pleasantly situated on the western slope of the Chiltern Hills, about half a mile from the lower Iknield Way, and midway between the two main roads from London to Oxford. According to Dr. Plot its name is derived from the wattles, or crates, with which the early Saxons were accustomed to build their primitive houses, first interlacing them with sticks and then daubing them over with mud. At any rate, it had an early existence, for in Domesday it is described as one of the many manors held by Robert D'Oily. In the reign of Richard I, Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, appears to have been lord of the manor, and secured from that sovereign a charter to hold a weekly market on Saturdays. Subsequent holders of the manor included Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III, and later Piers Gaveston, to whom it was granted by Edward II. In the reign of Edward III Sir Nicholas de la Beche obtained permission to convert his house into a castle, but this has long since passed away, and the site is now barely traceable at the east end of the church. In the reign of Charles I the manor was bestowed upon four citizens of London, by whom it was sold to Thomas Adeane and Edward Symeon of Pyrton, the father-in-law of John Hampden, whose connection with this district we shall have occasion to refer to later. In the centre of the town,

at the junction of four roads, stands the singular red-brick market house, now undergoing restoration. It was built in 1664 by Thomas Stonor, who in the same year founded a free grammar school for the education of ten boys of the town and parish of Watlington. The seclusion of the town from the main routes of traffic through the county has largely contributed to the quiet and uneventful life which it has led, and still to a large extent prevents its development in modern times. About a mile to the north-east stands the old moated castle of Shirburn, now the home of the Earls of Macclesfield.

XV. Henley-on-Thames

Last but not least in importance of the Oxfordshire towns is Henley, whose favourable situation upon the banks of the river has rendered it in recent years a pleasant resort for boating enthusiasts and pleasure seekers in the delightful scenery of the Thames valley. Ancient though the site of the town undoubtedly is, it is remarkable that Domesday contains no reference to it whatever, nor are the successive owners of the manorial estate of any particular interest. It is, undoubtedly, with its convenient position for crossing the river that the interest of Henley is most closely associated. At low water traces are still to be seen of what was apparently a stone bridge across the river, to be followed in later years by the old wooden bridge. This gave place, in 1786, to the present handsome structure, which gives access to the town from the Berkshire side.

Long before the time of Elizabeth there existed a corporation partaking both of a lay and ecclesiastical character, and charged with the duty of maintaining the parish church and the bridge. In early documents mention is made of warden, bridgemen, burgesses, and commonalty, from which it may be inferred that the proper care of the bridge was an important duty even in remote times. The precise date of the church is uncertain, but John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln from 1521 to 1547, is

HENLEY BRIDGE

supposed to have built the tower, while he certainly founded and endowed an almshouse. Henley received its first charter from Elizabeth in 1567, in which it is decreed that Henley shall be and remain a free town, and that the inhabitants shall be one body, politic and corporate, in deed, fact, and name, by the name of Warden, Portreeves, Burgesses, and Commonalty of the said town.

A charter of 1722, in the ninth year of George I, vests the government of the town in a mayor, recorder, ten aldermen, of whom the mayor was one, two bridgemen, and sixteen burgesses. By virtue of their office, and in conformity with ancient usage, the bridgemen for the time being were to be the churchwardens of the parish church, a conjunction of duties which appears to be in harmony with the prevalent idea that the building and maintenance of a bridge was a meritorious act of religious service. With the passing of the Bridge Act in 1781, and the subsequent erection of the present bridge, the repair and maintenance of the structure was otherwise provided for. Still the corporation, left untouched by the Municipal Reform Act of 1832, continued to be controlled under its old charter until 1833, when by a new charter its government was constituted as it now stands.

CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY

I. The Influence of the Monasteries

To imagine Oxford suddenly deprived of the magnificent colleges and buildings which adorn its streets, and of the many university interests and attractions which have grown up within it during the course of centuries, would be to rob it at one stroke of everything which makes its name famous the wide world over. And yet there was a time when Oxford was a mere county town, doing little beyond ministering to its own needs and the needs of the district lying adjacent to it.

In their desire to give the University the halo of antiquity, there are some who have ventured to assert that Oxford was a seat of learning in the far away times of the Britons, but such surmises are utterly worthless and fanciful. Even the old tradition, so long and tenaciously held, that it owes its origin to the reforming zeal of Alfred the Great has had to give way to more enlightened information.

But when and where did the University begin?—a question much easier to ask than to answer. In searching for information one naturally looks for reliable records in the writings of the time, but up to the end of Stephen's reign there is an entire absence of any definite reference to university life within the city walls; with the reign of Henry III, however, such references not only commence, but are fairly frequent. Still another hundred years must pass by before the first college building comes into existence.

There are some who have endeavoured to show that the University took its rise in schools attached to the monasteries of St. Frideswide and Osney, and when one re-

members how great a debt the country owes to the care with which the old monastic institutions fostered education there is something plausible in the idea. There can be no doubt that the monasteries and abbeys, which had come into existence in great numbers since the later Saxon times, exercised a powerful influence on the welfare of the country. Not only were they centres of religious life, but they were also institutions where education and the industrial arts were watched over with zealous care. As road builders and bridge builders, too, the monks left their mark on the country, and it is easy to understand how greatly the countryside felt the loss of their beneficial influence when Henry VIII abolished them.

To most of the monasteries schools were attached, and it is altogether probable that the great abbey at Osney and the monastery of St. Frideswide were so provided. But that in these schools the beginning of the University is to be found is entirely another question. If it were so, then we should most certainly expect to find the Abbot of Osney and the Prior of St. Frideswide asserting their authority in the formation and development of what was soon to become a powerful organization. But the University grew up without any direct assistance from those influential prelates ; their main interests were far different. With the course of years, by the endowments which they received, the religious houses became, many of them, enormously wealthy. Sometimes money was left to them to pray for the souls of the departed ; sometimes unscrupulous and avaricious men who had extorted wealth by plunder and oppression, would leave to them land and property in the hope that their generosity to the Church would secure for them consideration in the next world ; sometimes devout and charitable people would endow them with funds to alleviate the wants of the poor, the sick, and the distressed. Whatever the method of acquisition may have been, they grew, as a body, extremely rich, and yielded to the temptation of furthering their own interests as landed proprietors rather than watching over the people who had been entrusted to their care.

II. The Coming of the Friars

As a protest against the luxury and wealth displayed by the monastic houses, there came into existence a body of men who were destined to exert a powerful influence on the University which was yet to come. These men were the Friars. Of different orders, but bound by much the same rules, they went out into the world to show that the priests of the Church had something more to do than merely to secure the salvation of their own souls. Forbidden to hold any land or property, and dressed in coarse and homely garments, they were sent into the highways and hedges to preach to the ignorant, and to assist the sick and afflicted. Begging their way from town to town, preaching in market places or on village greens, penetrating into the slums of the large towns, they mingled with the lowliest of the low, and selected the most needy districts for their settlements. The first to come to England, and to Oxford, were the Dominicans, the followers of St. Dominic, popularly called the Black Friars from the colour of their rough serge gowns. At first they settled in the Jewry, which extended along St. Aldate's between Carfax and Christ Church gate, but before long their quarters became too limited, and they migrated to the low-lying meadows situated between Speedwell Street, the river, and St. Aldate's. Here, somewhere about 1259, they built themselves a friary, the site of which is still marked by Friars Wharf and Blackfriars Street.

Almost immediately after their arrival, there appeared, in 1224, the Grey Friars or Franciscans. Of the nine who landed at Dover two penetrated as far as Oxford, and their arrival in the neighbourhood is sufficiently interesting to deserve narration. Crossing the Chilterns they descended into the valley of the Thames, to find themselves belated by the night and in danger of losing their lives in the winter floods. Happily they discovered, near to Baldon, a farm-house in the occupation of the monks of Abingdon. Here they begged for rest and refreshment. The porter, seeing their dirty faces and ragged vestments,

mistook them for jesters, and so described them to the prior, who gladly welcomed their arrival as a means of wiling away the tedium of a long winter evening. They indignantly repudiated the suggestion, declaring that they were the servants of God and the professors of an apostolic life. Whereupon they were promptly shown the door and ushered once more into the cheerless winter night. One young novice, however, took pity on their forlorn condition, and moved the porter to give them lodging in a hay loft. There with his own hands he took them food, remaining to condole with them on the hardness of their lot. After this act of mercy he retired to his cell, but not to dreamless rest. In his sleep he saw Christ sitting on His throne and calling all to judgement. At His dread summons the prior and the monks appeared before Him to find themselves challenged by a poor friar, who charged them with inhumanity in turning from their door the servants of the Master. Thereupon, in a dreadful voice, Christ said to the prior, "Of what order art thou?" Tremblingly, he replied, "Of the order of St. Benedict." "Is it true that he speaks?" said Christ, turning to St. Benedict. "Nay, Lord," replied St. Benedict, "for I have given order in my rule that the abbot's table should be free for guests, and now these have denied those things that were but necessary for the wayfarer."

At which reply Christ commanded the prior to be immediately hanged on the elm tree before the cloister. Sacrist and cellarer suffered the same fate, and then came the turn of the young novice who had shown pity to the belated friars. Challenged with the same question he replied, "I am of the same order that this poor man is." Then Christ said to the poor friar, whose name thus far had not been mentioned, "Francis, is it true that he is of your order." "He is mine, O Lord, he is mine," replied St. Francis, "and from henceforth I receive him as one of my order." Overjoyed at his escape the young novice suddenly awoke and ran with all haste to the prior, only to find him and the monks almost suffocated in their sleep. With earliest morn he sought out the friars in their hay loft, but they, fearing the anger of the prior,

were already gone. Thereupon the novice sped with all haste to the Abbot of Abingdon, and told him the tale, the recital of which so influenced him that, taking the novice with him, he followed the friars to Oxford, and there both of them took upon them the habit of St. Francis.

So the Grey Friars came to Oxford, and, after taking up temporary quarters with the Black Friars, ultimately built themselves a house between the city wall and Church Street, later on receiving property which included the ground stretching down to the banks of the Trill Mill stream. The gardens of the friary were situated where Paradise Square now stands, the modern name being a survival of the term " Paradise ", then commonly applied to convent gardens. Of all the orders, the Grey Friars exerted the greatest influence upon the growing University, and, among other famous men, included in their number the renowned scholar and reputed magician, Roger Bacon.

After the Grey Friars came the White Friars, or Carmelites, so called from their celebrated monastery on Mount Carmel. Their first settlement was in Stockwell Street, where Worcester College now stands, but, as we have already stated, they finally found a home in Beaumont Palace. In his wars with Scotland, Edward I, in accordance with the custom of the times, took with him a Carmelite, named Baston, to sing his exploits. This same man was with Edward II at Bannockburn, when that monarch, in the terror of his flight from the field, vowed that if he escaped he would provide a better house for the poor White Friars at Oxford. Afterwards, the Carmelite took care that the vow should be redeemed, and the royal palace of Beaumont was consequently made over to the White Friars as a residence. Beaumont Palace has long since passed away, but Friars Entry still marks the approach to their famous convent. The other orders which came to Oxford were less important. The Austin Friars, named after St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, arrived about 1268, and ultimately settled on the site now occupied by Wadham College. The Trinitarians had a house outside

the East Gate, the Penitentiarians another outside the West Gate, while the Crutched Friars, so called from the wooden cross they carried in their hands, took up their quarters at Grandpont, and later near St. Peter in the East.

III. The Early Teachers

And now it is time to see what bearing the arrival of these zealous religionists had upon the University which was gradually coming into existence. When the Black Friars came upon the scene they certainly found schools already established, for though there is no definite mention of them at so early a date, the presence of learned men undoubtedly formed part of the inducement which led Henry I, the "Scholar King", to favour the city with his presence. The schools, such as they were, were simply isolated classes conducted by men of ability, who retained their hold on the students so long as the character and efficiency of their teaching maintained the interest of the pupils. The first teachers were undoubtedly monks, whether attached to the local monasteries or not, whose work at any rate was of sufficient value to extend the reputation of Oxford as a seat of learning beyond the English shores. For instance, about 1117, we find a Norman ecclesiastic, Theobaldus Stampensis by name, being credited with having "sixty or a hundred clerks, more or less", under his tuition.

In 1133 Robert Pullus came over from Paris to lecture on the Bible which, up to that time, was the chief subject of study. A little later, in 1149, there came from the famous University of Bologna the renowned Vacarius, who introduced a new subject, the study of Roman Law.

Up to this time many English students had been accustomed to cross over to the University of Paris to complete their education; but in 1167, Henry II, influenced perhaps by his quarrel with Becket, ordered all clerks to return to England, and the "Migration from Paris" which followed is now generally considered to be the actual starting-point of the University of Oxford as such.

Soon after, another important step in the development of student life took place, which resulted in the establishment of degrees as an indication of a teacher's ability to give instruction.

We have already seen that in all the trades and industries the craftsmen protected their interests by banding themselves together in trade guilds, to which no one could gain access except by a long apprenticeship and by finally satisfying the masters of the guild of their ability to perform their work. And just as an artisan ultimately became a Master in his guild, so there grew up a guild of learning, the hall mark of which was the degree of Master of Arts. Carpenter and smith, weaver and shoemaker, all served for seven long years as apprentices, and in like manner a seven years' course of study was required for the degree which made a man free of the guild of learning. Nowadays in Oxford the ordinary course of study is completed with the B.A. degree, but then the bachelor was merely the apprentice, the student who had ceased to be a pupil but had not yet become a teacher, the term, indeed, being borrowed from heraldry, where the bachelor was the aspirant to knighthood. The first reference to the degree of Master of Arts occurs in connexion with the name of Edmund Rich, an Abingdon boy, whose piety and self-denial were such as to render him famous as a teacher, and who subsequently attained to the high dignity of the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The story of St. Edmund is one that well deserves the attention of teachers and scholars, particularly the notable saying in which he urged his pupils " So to study as if they were to live for ever ; so to live as if they were to die to-morrow ".

Thus, when the friars first put in their appearance, they found schools already in existence, with a number of masters and faculties, and a very much larger number of students drawn from all parts of our own land and the Continent too. At a time when the Church was neglecting its educational work for other things, they threw themselves into the work of teaching with whole-hearted zeal, and soon attracted to themselves great numbers of students. In 1087, you will remember, Remigius transferred the

head quarters of his See from Dorchester to Lincoln, but succeeding bishops had continued to take considerable interest in this remote but important part of the diocese, nominating the Chancellor of the University and otherwise assisting its progress.

Of these educational reformers the Franciscans were the most conspicuous, and somewhere about the middle of the thirteenth century we find their first prior, Agnellus of Pisa persuading Robert Grosseteste, the Bishop of Lincoln, to lecture in their schools. Adam Marsh was the first of their order to lecture at Oxford, and the fame of his teaching and that of his contemporaries soon brought friars to study not only from Scotland and Ireland but also from the whole of Western Europe. Famous men like Duns Scotus and William Ockham were trained by these teachers, while the still more famous Roger Bacon ended his days as a Franciscan friar.

The subjects of study in those days were naturally limited in scope, being divided into two main groups. First came the smaller group, including grammar (Latin, of course), rhetoric, and logic, to which the ordinary scholars confined themselves, and then the more advanced group containing arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. The faithful churchmen, however, considered these subjects as merely preparatory to the study of theology. It was because Roger Bacon dared to think otherwise that he incurred the displeasure of his order. Displaying a remarkable genius for scientific research, he contemplated committing the result of his inquiries to writing, only to be absolutely forbidden to do any such thing by his superiors. At the command of the Pope, but against the wish of his brethren, however, he wrote the three scientific works which have made his name famous, the *Opus Majus*, the *Opus Minus*, and the *Opus Tertium*. On an arch spanning the roadway over Grandpont Bridge, somewhere near where Salters' boathouse now stands, had been built a house of one storey. To this house a man named Welcome ventured to add another storey, the building of which earned for it the name of Welcome's Folly. Tradition says that Bacon

Friar Bacon's Study

was accustomed to use the upper room as a study. Friar Bacon's study and Welcome's Folly have long since passed away, but the latter name still persists in Folly Bridge.

IV. The Mediaeval Student

And now, having in some measure discussed the work carried on in these early schools, let us turn our attention to the students who attended them. In those days, it must be remembered, there were few public schools to

Great Lion Hall

give a preliminary education, so that boys came up to the University earlier and stayed longer. As term approached they might be seen travelling towards the city, some on horseback, some by carrier's cart, but many on foot, for there were poor among them as well as rich. Having arrived at their destination, they would find lodgings in the private house of some citizen, in the inns, or hostels, or in one of the many Halls, where groups of them lived together under some recognized head. The old inns have given way to much more imposing buildings, but the Clarendon, the Roebuck, the Mitre, still mark the site of some original hostel.

To found a Hall, too, was in those days a much simpler process than in these. It merely meant that a group of students should combine together to take a house where they might live under the recognized headship of one of their number who was responsible to the University for their good behaviour. Later, indeed, it was found necessary to insist that the head should be a master, still elected to that position by his students, and retaining his post only so long as he continued to satisfy his pupils. The names of many of these halls are yet to be found scattered over the central part of the city; Leden Porch Hall,

Beam Hall

Beam Hall, and many another beside; any peculiarity in the construction of the building, or even the name of the master, sufficed to distinguish it. Along St. Mary's Entry, called in the old days Schools' Street, along Brasenose Lane and the Turl were others which have long since been absorbed in the colleges built on their sites.

In such quarters they found a lodging for the greater part of the year, coming up in September and remaining till the Long Vacation called them home again; more frequent holidays were rendered inexpedient by the difficulty and expense of travelling. Nor was the standard of their comfort in any way to be compared with that enjoyed by the student to-day. Partly through lack of

accommodation, and partly with a view to economy, they were often compelled to combine into parties to hire a single room, in which they not only lived and studied, but also slept. The greater part of the day was spent in study at the various schools, with little intermission for recreation. For the poorer students the fare was often coarse and meagre ; a hunch of bread and a pot of small ale for breakfast ; a more substantial meal in the middle of the day, and supper at five. When darkness fell they would retire to rest, their slender means forbidding so expensive a luxury as candles.

Pent up in such a monotonous round, with little in the way of sports and pastimes to work off the superfluous energy of their young lives, it is not to be wondered that animal spirits should sometimes get the better of discretion, and that when faction fights among themselves were not for the moment pressing, they should combine in turning their attention to the citizens, who, on their side, were none the less ready for a brawl. Indeed, with such a mixed collection of students it is not difficult to understand the frequent conflicts between northerners and southerners, or between English and Scots. The disturbing influence of these internal conflicts between themselves, and more particularly those with the townsmen, had far-reaching effects upon the subsequent organization of the students. While their party strife led to better regulations for the maintenance of discipline, and the ultimate introduction of the collegiate system, their conflicts with the townsmen brought the University, as a whole, into a position of predominant authority over the city.

V. Town and Gown

We have already seen how it became necessary for the teachers to protect their personal interests by the formation of a guild of learning ; now we must see how the rivalry of town and gown brought about an organized central authority, charged with maintaining the interests of the students. At a time when the scholars were en-

tirely dependent upon the townsfolk for housing and for the supply of provisions, any little difference of opinion on the quality of the food or the price to be paid might easily lead to a quarrel, and where this cause of conflict failed, any personal insult one way or the other might lead to a serious riot. Thus, for instance, in 1208, a girl was found murdered in a house afterwards known as Maiden Hall, the circumstances pointing to a student as the guilty party. The citizens, thirsting for vengeance, seized two of the alleged murderer's fellow students and forthwith hanged them outside the city walls. The immediate response to this infringement of the University privileges was the wholesale migration of the students to Cambridge, Reading, and Maidstone, a form of protest easily accomplished in the days when the University was little dependent on established collegiate buildings. The citizens, too, were put under an interdict by Pope Innocent III, and this, with the loss of the patronage of the students, brought them to submission after a stubborn resistance which lasted four years. The most important result of the conflict, however, lay in the privileges which were granted as compensation to the University. Henceforth the townsmen were bound, if they arrested a student, to deliver him up to the Bishop of Lincoln, the Archdeacon of Oxford, or to the Chancellor, who had been set over the scholars by the bishop. Minor penalties included the right of the University to regulate the price and conditions under which food was sold in the public markets, and an annual oath on the part of the chief burgesses to maintain the regulations imposed. Space will not permit a relation of all the conflicts that took place; but other serious riots occurred in 1248, 1264, 1297, and 1331. In that of 1297, the clerks, on the one hand, broke open warehouses in the Spicery and the Cutlery, while the citizens retaliated by invading the inns, breaking up the property of the students, and trampling on their books. The king, to whom both parties appealed, ultimately settled the matter by imposing a fine of 200 marks on the citizens, removing their bailiffs, and banishing twelve of the most turbulent citizens.

The most remarkable riot of all was perhaps that known as the riot of St. Scholastica's Day, which took place on February 10, 1354. Some students bent upon keeping the feast were drinking at the Swyndlestock Inn, near Carfax, and incurred the resentment of the landlord by finding fault with the quality of the wine supplied. Angry words soon led to blows, partisans collected on both sides, and what began as a brawl ended as a riot. The bell in the city church of St. Martin was rung to call

Old Carfax Church

the citizens to arms, and the challenge was immediately taken up by the responsive ringing of the bell of St. Mary's, at which signal the students at once combined their forces. The riot continued till nightfall, and lusty blows were given on both sides, but still with no worse effects than sore heads and painful wounds. Happy had it been if the conflict had ended there; but next day the citizens, reinforced by allies from without the city walls, began a deadly attack upon the students, and this time, being the stronger

party, they inflicted a terrible punishment on their opponents. In the end, six members of the University were killed outright, twenty-one were dangerously wounded, and not a few were missing. King Edward III, who happened to be at Woodstock at the time, sent a commission to inquire into the cause of the riot; the sheriff was dismissed from his office, two hundred of the townsmen were arrested, and the mayor and bailiffs committed to the Tower. The final settlement of the dispute left the University easily the gainers. They received from the king a new charter, which not only endorsed all their former privileges, but gave to the Chancellor, in addition, the power of assessing the taxes, the "assize" of bread, beer, and wine, the "assay" of weights and measures, and exacted from the sheriff an annual oath to maintain the privileges of the University. Two hundred and fifty pounds had to be paid down to compensate the scholars for the loss of goods and books, and even then the cup of humiliation was not full. The interdict which had been placed on the city by the Bishop of Lincoln was not removed till the mayor, bailiffs, and sixty of the chief burghers had consented to an annual pilgrimage to St. Mary's on the anniversary of the day, to say a solemn Mass for the repose of the slain, and to contribute one penny each at the great altar.

This humiliating service continued till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when it was changed to an annual sermon, the contribution of pence being still continued. Such it remained until the time of Charles II, but the oath of allegiance was not finally discontinued till 1854. By such an issue of events, then, the University acquired not only enlarged powers in the management of its own affairs, but virtually made itself master of the city as well.

VI. The Early Colleges

Now we must turn our attention to the consequences which these conflicts of the students, both with the citizens and among themselves, had on the formation of collegiate life. Even in 1250 it had been necessary to require that

St. Mary's Church

every student should put himself under the authority of a recognized master, but so long as he was permitted to live very much where and how he liked, it was obvious that the bonds of discipline could not be very strong. The remedy of the evil seemed to lie in requiring the students to live together under the control of properly appointed authorities. Not that the earliest colleges were founded

The Brazen Nose

with this specific point in view, but the advantages of the system were not long in making themselves manifest.

In 1249 there died at Rouen, William, Archdeacon of Durham, who left in his will 310 marks in trust to the University to invest for the benefit and support of a certain number of masters. With this money the University bought a house situated at the corner of St. Mildred's Lane (now Brasenose Lane) on the north-east of the site

where Brasenose College now stands. This, the first property acquired by the University, became known as "University Hall". Other houses were also bought, Drogheda Hall, a house in High Street, probably on the site of Queen's College, and Brasenose Hall. Then, in 1280, statutes were granted to the masters by which University College was established, although it was not transferred to its present site till further benefactions rendered this possible in 1332.

The origin of Balliol College was also of a similar character. Sir John de Balliol, father of the claimant to the Scottish crown, had incurred the displeasure of the Bishop of Durham by plundering the Church within that diocese. He secured pardon for his offence only by submitting to a public scourging at the door of Durham Abbey, and by undertaking to provide a perpetual maintenance for poor students at the University. In 1266 we find these poor students settled in a house near to St. Mary Magdalen Church, and, on the death of their patron, receiving continued support from his wife, Dervorguilla. Further premises were secured in Horsemonger Lane (Broad Street), while the statutes which regulated their duties were issued in 1282.

If the foundation of a college is to be reckoned from the date of its first charter, then Merton is certainly the oldest college in the University. Walter de Merton had been Chancellor of the kingdom under Henry III, and in the intervals of his duties at Court took the opportunity of developing a scheme for supporting students at the University. In 1263 he set aside certain property to provide for the maintenance of his scholars, and in the next year drew up a code of rules regulating their duties and method of life with considerable minuteness. During the next ten years these rules were considerably altered and improved, but in 1274 they were finally issued as the statutes of the college; and so excellent were they found to be, that they were frequently accepted as models for the rules of other colleges, not only in Oxford, but also at Cambridge. The buildings which Walter de Merton acquired as a permanent home for his scholars stood on

the site of the present college, but, as in the case of most of the older foundations, little remains of the original buildings. As a matter of fact, they were usually halls or houses adapted for the reception of students, and replaced later on by buildings of the collegiate style as the endowments of benefactors rendered such steps possible. Neither University nor Balliol can show any part of the buildings

Mob Quad, Merton College

of the founder's time, and Merton little more than the old muniment room and the walls of the Hall. To see a college planned and built for the express purpose of housing students under the collegiate system, one must go to New College. William of Wykeham, its founder, is an example, not uncommon in those times, of a boy who rose by sheer merit from the ranks of the people. The son of a carpenter, he entered the king's service, and was later promoted to the responsible task of superintending the

NEW COLLEGE (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

reconstruction of the buildings at the king's castle at Windsor. Then came promotion to the Bishopric of Winchester, and finally to the Chancellorship of the kingdom. As an architect of no small genius he set about building for his students a home, so excellently adapted to the purpose that very little change has subsequently been made in the original portion. Round the four sides of one large quadrangle were placed all the buildings necessary for the requirements of the time.

Entering by the broad gateway, surmounted by its tower, one sees, on the northern side of the quadrangle, the chapel and hall under one roof. Above the stairway leading to the hall is the muniment tower, and on the eastern side the library. In a line with the gate tower in the western block is the warden's lodging, while the southern side of the quadrangle contains the rooms provided for the accommodation of the students. Outside the quadrangle, and to the west of the chapel, are the cloisters, now generally deserted, but then used for lecture and recreation, and as a burial-ground. These buildings, together with the necessary offices, remain as designed by the founder, except for the addition of another storey on three sides of the quadrangle. Since Wykeham's time large additions have, of course, been made, but in the original building one may see the fruitful seed which in due time was to bear fruit in the many handsome colleges that adorn our city.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

I. Lancaster and York

The history of our own county in the fifteenth century has a very small share of the chief political events which go to make up the history of the country. During the sway of the Plantagenet kings, Oxford and the adjacent towns had received many marks of the royal patronage, but, under the rule of the Lancastrians and the rival House of York, war, both at home and abroad, largely tended to divert the attention of the monarchs from the city and county which had proved so attractive to their predecessors. Edward IV, indeed, used Woodstock as an occasional residence, and was often at Langley for the purpose of hunting in Wychwood Forest. Once, too, in 1481, while he was with his court at Woodstock, he consented to make a journey in state to the University for the purpose of inspecting the new Magdalen College built by William of Waynfleet. To Oxford also came Richard III, in 1483, on his way from London to York, glad of the opportunity of ingratiating himself with the University whose opinion on his claim to the throne was not to be disregarded.

The peace of the county remained unruffled by the Wars of the Roses, save for the solitary engagement at Edgecott, near Banbury, in which the Lancastrian rebels from the north in 1469 defeated and killed Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. The rule of the House of York was short-lived, and with its overthrow there fell, too, the fortunes of a notable Oxfordshire family to which it is interesting to refer. The Lovels had settled in the county as early as 1107, and built for themselves a mansion about three miles to the west of Witney. In 1200

the same family founded a priory and made it over to the Norman abbey of Ivry. Thus the place became known as Minster Lovel. The alien priories were dissolved at various times, and in 1415 the estate reverted to the family. Then, William, Lord Lovel, built a splendid manor house, including in his building some portions of the old priory. The grandson of this man, Francis, Viscount Lovel, was by no means popular, having, although a Lancastrian, taken office under Richard III. A rhyme of the period speaks of him in anything but complimentary terms :—

> "The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel the dog
> Ruled all England under the Hog."

Thus were described Sir William Catesby, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, and Lord Lovel, the favourites of Richard III, whose badge of a white boar suggested his nickname. Lord Lovel remained faithful to Richard, and, after his defeat and death at Bosworth Field, escaped to the Low Countries. The insurrection under the Earl of Lincoln and Lambert Simnel gave him the opportunity of returning to fight against the usurper, Henry VII, at the Battle of Stoke, an engagement which proved no less disastrous than Bosworth Field. After the battle he was seen endeavouring to swim his horse across the Trent, but after that all trace of him was lost. Tradition says that in secrecy he made his way back to the ancestral home to hide in a vaulted chamber, the entrance to which the old housekeeper alone knew. There she fed him for months till she herself was suddenly removed by death, leaving her secret untold and her charge securely locked away in his unknown hiding-place.

Two hundred years later, during alterations in the building, a large underground vault was discovered containing the entire skeleton of a man in a sitting position before a table on which were pens and paper. This was supposed to be the last remains of the unhappy man, the ruins of whose home are still among the most picturesque in the county.

The events of the fifteenth century with which Oxford

Ruins of Minster Lovell

was most intimately associated were those which in the end led up to the Reformation. They were in the main twofold in character, partly political and partly intellectual. On the one hand there was a growing feeling against the Pope's claim to interfere in any way in the government of the country, while on the other hand the revival of learning provided the opportunity for men to investigate religious truths for themselves.

II. The Rise of the Lollards

Under the Norman and early Plantagenet kings the great religious houses had been growing enormously rich, and with the increase of their wealth were fast assuming the position of rich landowners, rather than using their revenues for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the poor entrusted to their care. Then came the friars, protesting against the luxury and selfishness of the monks, but, in their turn, yielding to the same temptation and becoming equally neglectful. Thus, towards the close of the fourteenth century the time was ripe for still another body of reformers, afterwards to be known as the Lollards, and whose first champion and leader was John Wycliffe. He it was who protested, both in teaching and preaching, against the corruption into which the religious orders had fallen, and against the claims made by the Pope to interfere in other than religious affairs.

Of his early education at Oxford little is known, but in 1360 he appears to have become Master of Balliol College. Five years later we find him appointed to the headship of the newly-constituted Canterbury College, for the foundation of which Archbishop Islip had displaced the Benedictine monks. Against this appointment the monks successfully appealed to the Pope, and Wycliffe was deposed. On the whole, Wycliffe's opinions received the support of the University authorities, to whom the friars were troublesome and the papal claims irksome. Among other powerful friends was the renowned John of Gaunt, who was antagonistic

to the regular clergy from more worldly reasons ; indeed, it was entirely due to his influence that Wycliffe escaped punishment when summoned before the Bishop of London in 1377. In spite of Papal bulls issued against him, Wycliffe persisted in the expression of his views, and ultimately organized his band of " poor preachers " to propagate his doctrines among the people. It was probably with the purpose of assisting their labours that Wycliffe undertook the task of producing a translation of the complete Bible in the mother-tongue. The New Testament was entirely his own work, but in the Old Testament he was assisted by his fellow labourer Nicholas Hereford, who had devotedly supported him in his many trying ordeals. The whole work was not finally issued until its originator had been dead four years, and its circulation was no small factor in preparing the way for the Reformation a hundred and fifty years later. Wycliffe himself died in 1384, smitten down by paralysis at his rectory of Lutterworth, but his followers continued to maintain his doctrines in spite of persecution until the beginning of the reign of Henry V. Although the University had loyally supported Wycliffe in the charges which were brought against him, the same sympathy was not accorded to his followers. At the close of the reign of Henry IV it exacted that all graduates before proceeding to their degrees should take an oath not to maintain those principles of Wycliffe's teaching which had been condemned, while the heads of houses were also required once a year to swear that they would not admit any one suspected of Lollardism into their colleges or halls.

One direct consequence of the spread of Wycliffe's doctrines was the foundation of Lincoln College in 1429. Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, its founder, had been in his earlier years one of the supporters of Wycliffe ; but feeling alarmed lest the teaching of the Lollards should prove disastrous to the authority of the Church, he established " his little college of true students in theology who would defend the mysteries of the sacred page against those ignorant laics who profaned with swinish snouts its most holy pearls."

III. The Renaissance

The second great cause of the Reformation was the revival of learning, which began to make itself felt in England at the close of the fifteeenth century. Up to that time the course of studies required from the scholars had been mainly considered as preparatory to the study of theology. In those days there were no written examinations, and the abilities of the students were tested by the skill they showed in the "disputations", or public arguments on subjects which were mainly theological or philosophical. Greek was an unknown language, and the books available for study were chiefly the works of Latin authors, including the Vulgate edition of the Bible and the writings of the Fathers. But with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 there came into Western Europe a flood of classical manuscripts, and in Italy particularly, the study of Greek was taken up with ardour. Among other famous Oxford men who went on the Continent to secure a share in the new learning were Thomas Linacre and William Grocyn. From them Sir Thomas More, Erasmus, and other notable scholars learned Greek, and before long the study of that language secured a recognized position in the curriculum of the University.

The great majority of the Greek authors were, of course, pagan, but it must be remembered that the available manuscripts of the Scriptures were in Greek, and it was the discovery of these documents which led in our own country to a more careful study of Holy Scripture, and the correction of ecclesiastical abuses. Furthermore, the influence of the printing-press was now beginning to make itself felt, and printed books, including among them copies of the Scriptures, became more and more available to ordinary people. Thus, on the one hand, the teaching of the Lollards which touched the life of the common people, and, on the other hand, the revival of learning which appealed to the educated, were both preparing the way for the Reformation.

During this period of transition and change sagacious

men were beginning to see that the religious houses were no longer fulfilling the purposes for which they were founded, and that it would be better if the money which had been entrusted to them for the benefit of the people were devoted to educational purposes. It is true, also, that unscrupulous men were looking with avaricious eyes on their vast revenues, for the previous dissolution of the alien priories had shown them the possibility of enriching themselves with part of the spoil.

This general feeling that the monasteries were approaching their end is shown in the circumstances attending the foundation of Corpus Christi College. Bishop Foxe, its founder, had originally intended that it should be a college in connexion with the monastery of St. Swithun at Winchester, but before its completion he yielded to the advice of his fellow bishop of Exeter.

"What! my Lord," said that prelate, "shall we build houses and provide livelihood for a company of monks, whose end and fall we ourselves may live to see? No, no. It is more meet, a great deal, that we should have care to provide for the increase of learning, and for such as by their learning shall do good in the Church and Commonwealth."

Thus Corpus came into existence, and the statutes drawn up by its founder show clearly how large an influence the new learning exerted upon the plans which he had in view. The most conspicuous innovation was the institution of a public lecturer in Greek, whose services were to be given to the whole University, and the long list of Greek authors to be studied shows how thoroughly he expected the work to be carried out. Theology, too, which, as a prelate, the founder held in high estimation, was to be studied, but on new and broader lines, assisted by authors whose works the revival of learning had now rendered available.

IV. The Suppression of the Monasteries

During this period there was rising into power that famous man, Thomas Wolsey, who was destined to play no small part in the fortunes of his University. In his desire to advance the standard of learning among the clergy, he proposed in the first instance to establish public lectureships in the University, but his idea ultimately developed into a much more ambitious plan, that of founding a college which should surpass in its resources all the foundations which had preceded it. Although his private wealth was great, it was yet incapable of standing the strain of such a huge scheme, and his first step was to secure the consent of the Pope and the king to the suppression of the Priory of St. Frideswide and the adaptation of its revenues to the purposes of his college. Thus it came about that Wolsey's new college was founded upon the site of St. Frideswide's Priory. A little later another Papal bull was obtained, which permitted him to suppress any number of small religious houses all over the country, and to devote their revenues up to the amount of three thousand golden ducats to the foundation of his college. A large site fronting on St. Aldate's was cleared, and with the demolition of existing buildings there disappeared the old Chapel of St. Michael at the South Gate, and part of the city wall. In front of the Priory Church of St. Frideswide, the greater part of which he retained, and which is now the chapel of the college and the cathedral church of the diocese, Wolsey planned an immense quadrangle measuring 264 by 261 feet. A portion of this only, including the magnificent dining hall and the kitchen, was completed when the fateful controversy concerning the legality of Henry VIII's marriage with Catharine of Aragon brought about Wolsey's fall and his subsequent death in 1530. Thereupon Cardinal College, as such, came to an end, but out of it there came into existence "King Henry VIII's College at Oxford."

It must be remembered that the dominant religious

Tom Quad, Christ Church

party in the country was strenuously opposed to the "reformers", who still maintained the doctrines of Wycliffe while at the same time they concurred in the advisability of the suppression of the monasteries. Among the peasantry and artisans of the western border of the county the flame of religious fervour which Wycliffe's poor preachers had kindled still burned brightly, and stringent measures were taken to suppress the heresy. Brought up before the ecclesiastical authorities, men and women who were prepared to suffer anything for conscience' sake were subjected to the severest penalties; they were branded on the cheek with the mark of the cross, and forbidden to hide the mark "with hat, cap, hood, kerchief, napkin, or with more than fourteen days' growth of beard"; they were compelled to forswear their opinions, and to submit to life-long penance, and any further relapse was punished by a fiery death at the stake.

The heretics at Burford were compelled to endure a special penance; they were, on a certain market day, to carry a faggot on their shoulders three times round the market place, and to stand with it for a quarter of an hour on the top step of the market cross; they were further required to carry their faggot at the head of a church procession and to kneel with it on the altar steps during Mass, all this as a symbol that they had only escaped the fire by grace.

Meanwhile the suppression of the monasteries continued; first the smaller institutions with revenues under £200 a year, and then, in 1539, the whole of them. Sir John Williams, of Thame, High Sheriff of the county, was one of the visitors to the condemned monasteries, and to him most of the religious houses in the county surrendered; Eynsham in 1539, Osney, Thame, Godstow, and Studley in 1540. Out of the revenues of the dissolved houses it was the intention of Henry VIII to constitute two bishoprics, but in the end one only was formed in 1542, having for its cathedral the ancient abbey church at Osney, with Robert King, its last abbot, first bishop of the new diocese. Thus the seat of the

The Cathedral, Christ Church

diocese which in 1087 had been transferred from Dorchester to Lincoln, once more, on the constitution of the new See, found its way back to the county. But the end of the famous abbey was drawing near, and in 1546 the episcopal See was united with King Henry VIII's College at Oxford, and thus St. Frideswide's Church became not only the chapel of the college, but also the cathedral church of the diocese. The dismantling of the abbey rapidly followed, and now all that remains of that once famous monastery is the six bells which form part of the peal now hung in the bell tower above the dining hall, together with Big Tom which nightly booms forth from its home in the tower above Wolsey's "Fayre" Gate.

At the early age of nine years Edward VI succeeded to the government, and naturally submitted to the guidance and control of his mother's relatives, who were pronounced Protestants. In religious matters the policy of Henry VIII was completely set aside, and commissioners were sent throughout the country to pull down all images in churches and to deface pictures; to destroy, in fact, everything which had reference to what the religious zeal of the reformers called superstition. In Oxford itself this wanton work of destruction was severely felt. The priceless books and manuscripts which Duke Humphrey of Gloucester had presented to the University, and for which he had helped to build the famous library over the Divinity School, were scattered in all directions; the splendid stained glass windows in the college chapels and elsewhere were ruthlessly broken; the magnificent reredos in the chapel of All Souls was ruined; while at Magdalen the high altar and various images and paintings were broken up, the organ burnt, and the vestments sold.

Such a reign of vandalism, happily, did not last long, but the end did not come before irreparable damage had been done to the religious relics of the past, a destruction which a more enlightened age cannot regard but with regret and displeasure.

V. Elizabeth Prisoner

With the accession of Queen Mary, in 1553, the pendulum of religious feeling swung sharply in the opposite direction. Daughter of Catherine of Aragon, and, later, wife of Philip II of Spain, it is easy to understand that all her sympathies were strongly in favour of the religion in which she had been brought up, and which had been subject to such severe repression during the reign of her half-brother. Strong had been the measures with which the commissioners of Edward VI had endeavoured to introduce the reformed religion; still stronger were the means which Mary adopted to root it out.

One of the first precautions taken was to insure against the possibility of her sister Elizabeth being looked upon as a possible leader of the Protestant party, and accordingly in 1554 the princess was committed to the Tower on a charge of complicity in Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion. The next year she was entrusted to the custody of Sir Henry Bedingfield, who, with a strong guard, set out to convey her to Woodstock. On entering the county she was entertained by Sir John Williams, at Rycote, and thence escorted by way of Islip and Gosford to her destination. At Woodstock the Gate House had been hastily fitted up for her reception, but the accommodation was meagre at its best.

Under such circumstances Elizabeth's imprisonment was far from happy, and some idea of the condition of her feelings may be gathered from the following lines which she is said to have written with a piece of burnt wood on a shutter :—

" O Fortune ! how thy restless wavering state
Hath fraught with care my troubled wit !
Witness this present prison whither fate
Could bear me and the joys I quit.
Thou causedst the guilty to be loosed
From bonds wherein are innocents inclosed :

Causing the guiltless to be straight reserved,
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envy can be nothing wrought,
So God send to my foes all they have thought.
Elizabeth Prisoner."

At another time she scratched with a diamond on a pane of glass—

" Much suspected, of me
Nothing proved can be,
Quoth Elizabeth Prisoner."

The hours of her solitary imprisonment were spent in study and working embroidery. In the Bodleian Library there is still preserved a little book of St. Paul's epistles on the cover of which is embroidered

" Vicit Omnia
E. * C.
Pertinax Veritas "

said to be the work of her own hands, the E. C. standing for Elizabeth Captiva.

VI. The Oxford Martyrs

Meanwhile the flames of persecution were mounting high ; the statutes against heretics were revived, and men and women who showed the least signs of resistance were haled off to prison. High and low alike were threatened, and among the most conspicuous of those who resisted were Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, all three of whom were committed to the Tower. In March, 1554, they were transferred to the custody of the mayor and bailiffs of Oxford, there to be examined before a commission appointed from both Universities. Lodged at first in the Bocardo prison over the old North Gate, they were subsequently removed to separate quarters in order that

they might not confer together. From April to October the succession of mock trials went on, first before the Oxford and Cambridge doctors, and then before a commission sent down from London to try them. Every plea of the commissioners urging them to recant they steadfastly resisted, and at last the long-expected sentence condemning them as obstinate and incurable heretics was passed.

The execution of Cranmer as Archbishop required the sanction of the Pope, and he was remanded to Bocardo, where, from the top of his prison house on October 16, 1555, he saw the sad procession of his fellow martyrs wending its way to the place of execution. Outside the North Gate, somewhere between the city wall and the front of Balliol College, the stakes and faggots had been fixed, a cross in the roadway of Broad Street now marking the traditional spot. Ridley appeared first, walking between the mayor and aldermen, and Latimer followed behind, the procession being protected by the city guard under arms to prevent disturbance. Looking back, Ridley spied Latimer hobbling after him, "Oh, be ye there?" he exclaimed. "Yea," answered the old man, "Have after as fast as I can follow." At the stake they embraced each other for the last time, and after kneeling down in prayer submitted themselves to the executioners. Close at hand were Lord Williams of Thame, the High Sheriff of the county, the Vice-Chancellor, and other commissioners, and a motley throng of townsfolk come to see the ghastly spectacle. After a sermon by Dr. Smith the victims were chained to the stake, and gunpowder hung about their necks to deliver them at least from part of their sufferings. A kindled faggot was then placed among the brushwood at Ridley's feet, and as the fire began to show itself his fellow martyr cried, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." The end came quickly to Latimer, but Ridley's fire burnt slowly, and it was only after a period of intense agony that he was seen to fall over and stir no more.

The end of Cranmer was still more pathetic. In addition to the trying ordeal which he had gone through with Ridley and Latimer he was called upon to take his trial before the Pope's legate. Summoned to answer a charge of blasphemy, incontinence, and heresy, he refused as firmly as the others to recognize the authority of the Pope. In February of the next year the condemnation arrived from Rome, and after every possible degradation had been heaped upon him he was handed over to the secular arm. Little wonder that after three years of imprisonment and terrible mental suffering the constancy of the aged man should at last give way. He signed a recantation, and on March 25, 1556, he was summoned to St. Mary's to make a public confession of it, but in the hour of his extremity his old courage came back to him again. On a low platform, erected opposite to the pulpit, he stood and listened to a sermon by Dr. Cole, the Provost of Eton, recounting his crimes but comforting him as a penitent. A few moments on his knees in prayer, a few words of exhortation to the people, and then, with a dramatic unexpectedness which astounded his hearers, he declared, "And for as much as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefore; for may I come to the stake it shall first be burned." At this the fury of the crowd broke forth and through the muddy streets the aged archbishop was hustled away to the stake, where, with a wonderful fortitude, he held his "unworthy right hand" in the fire, and with the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" on his lips, he paid the penalty of his faithfulness with his life.

VII. The University under the Sister Queens

During this troubled period two more colleges were added to those already in existence in the University, Trinity and St. John's. On the site of Trinity, an earlier foundation, known as Durham Hall, had been in existence since the end of the thirteenth century, but, being

MARTYRS' MEMORIAL

in part a monastic foundation, it reverted to the crown at the dissolution. Purchased ultimately by Sir Thomas Pope, and endowed by him, it has since played no small part in educating many of the famous men who have gone forth from the University.

The other college, St. John's, was also originally a monastic house, which in 1539 was granted by Henry VIII to his newly founded college of Christ Church. In 1555 a rich London trader and a loyal supporter of Queen Mary, Sir Thomas White, who had for some time been desirous of founding a college at Oxford, received a grant of the deserted buildings, and prepared to establish and endow the college of St. John the Baptist. Tradition says that he was directed in a dream to found a college hard by where three trunks grew from the root of a single elm, and although he had been previously favourable to the site where Worcester College now stands, the discovery of such an elm in the vicinity of the old Cistercian College of St. Bernard induced him to select the present site. Sir Thomas White's position as a Merchant Taylor had a marked influence on the destiny of the college, for he established between it and the company's great school in London a similar connexion to that already existing between New College and Winchester, and between Christ Church and Westminster. Of the influence which Archbishop Laud subsequently exerted on its history we shall speak later.

In spite of the foundation of these two colleges the reign of Mary was a period of deep depression to the University, and it was not till the accession of Elizabeth brought a respite from persecution that its prestige and influence began to return. The fostering care which the virgin queen delighted to bestow upon learning found expression in a state visit which she paid to the University and city in 1566. It was on August 31 in that year that the Earl of Leicester, then Chancellor of the University, accompanied by the University authorities, awaited at Wolvercote the arrival of the royal cortège. By them she was conducted to the Bocardo gate, where the mayor and corporation yielded up to her the city mace and

presented to her a gilt cup and forty pounds in gold. At Christ Church a royal lodging had been prepared for her, and during her six days' stay in the University she was entertained with such kind of academic exercises as befitted a queen who herself made no small pretension to scholarship. Disputations at which she attended were held in St. Mary's Church, a Latin sermon was preached in her presence, and Latin and English plays were acted on a stage set up in the hall of Christ Church. At last on September 6 she was conducted by the civic authorities as far as Magdalen Bridge, and by the University to Shotover, over which the road to London then went. On the hill side, looking back at the stately spires and towers of the university city, which had received her with so much enthusiasm, she exclaimed " Farewell the worthy University of Oxford ; Farewell my good subjects there ; Farewell my dear scholars, and may God prosper your studies. Farewell. Farewell." At the great house at Rycote she was entertained by Mr. Norreys, the son-in-law of her kindly gaoler, Lord Williams, in whose custody she had been as a prisoner twelve years before.

The Chancellor of the University at this time was the Earl of Leicester, whose name is remembered less perhaps from the statesmanlike reforms which he effected within the University than from the romantic story which the genius of Sir Walter Scott subsequently created around the name of his ill-fated wife, Amy Robsart. For the fanciful story of the cruel murder which Sir Richard Varney and Anthony Forster are said to have accomplished at Cumnor Place you must read *Kenilworth.* Whatever may be its truth, the fact remains that her dead body was conveyed to Oxford secretly by night, and after lying for some time with every symbol of mourning at Gloucester Hall (Worcester College), it was buried at St. Mary's on September 22, 1560. A marble slab in the floor of the chancel still bears record of her interment " in a brick vault at the upper end of the quire of this church ".

Twenty-six years after her first visit to Oxford the queen paid a second state visit to the University " to

behold the change and amendment of learning that had been in her long absence made". Much the same ceremonies were gone through, but scarcely with the same success as on the former occasion. With advancing years the patience of the queen had diminished, and she did not hesitate to suppress the over long orations of some of the ambitious speakers. Nevertheless, her affection for the University remained the same, and when, on September 28, 1592, she took her last look at its time-worn towers on her way to Rycote, she exclaimed, "Farewell, farewell, dear Oxford. God bless thee and increase thy sons in number, holiness, and virtue."

CHAPTER IX

THE COMING OF THE STUARTS

I. Royal Visitors to the County

The opening years of the seventeenth century saw a change of dynasty in England. In 1603 the long and peaceful reign of Elizabeth came to an end, and, in default of any nearer heir to the throne, the crown reverted to the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and great grandson of Margaret, the daughter of Henry VII. Already King of Scotland, James, by his succession to the throne of England, united the two kingdoms, although the union of the two parliaments was not effected till a hundred years later, in 1707. Leaving the home of his birth at his accession, James spent the greater part of his time in his new kingdom, and made frequent visits into Oxfordshire. Queen Elizabeth does not seem to have been at her royal manor of Woodstock after 1592, when she rested there a few days on her way to Oxford; but James I promptly paid it a visit from the eleventh to the sixteenth of September, in the first year of his reign.

In spite of the discomforts which his courtiers had to endure from the dilapidated condition of the manor house, the king's visits to Woodstock were frequent, scarcely a year passing by without a visit in the late autumn for a run through the forest after the deer. And not only to his own royal residence, but also to Langley, and to Sir Henry Lee's Park at Ditchley. In describing the old house at Ditchley, Hearne, the historian, quotes several of the inscriptions which were placed under the stag's horns suspended in the hall as trophies of the chase.

The following is typical of them all :—

"1610. Aug : 22. Wednesday.

In Henly knap to hunt me, King James, Prince Henry found me.
Cornbury park river to end their hunting drowned me."

The Prince Henry named here was heir to the throne, who unhappily died of a fever in 1612. One of his kindly actions, however, comes to light in the accounts of the exchequer for 1617, where a note occurs of the payment on behalf of the prince of £13 6*s*. 8*d*. to Thomas Wilson, a Woodstock shoemaker, for the apprenticeship of a poor boy whom Henry had taken out of the street.

It has rarely happened in the annals of English history that a change of dynasty has occurred without some attempt being made to overthrow the newly succeeding monarch. It was so in the case of James I ; first came the Main and Bye Plots in 1603, and then the attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605. As you will remember, one of the chief conspirators was Robert Catesby, a gentleman who was the owner of an ancient estate and mansion at Chastleton, on the western border of the county. In order to raise money for his schemes against the king, Catesby sold Chastleton House in 1602 for four thousand pounds, part of the money going, no doubt, to provide the gunpowder discovered in the cellars under the House of Lords. Walter Jones, the purchaser of the estate, pulled down the old house, erecting in its place the fine Elizabethan mansion still to be seen.

Of the county itself during the early years of the Stuart period there is little to say. Still occupied as before with agricultural pursuits, its inhabitants lived their quiet and uneventful lives upon the farms, the days of unremitting toil broken only by the occasional diversion of the fairs and markets, and the regularly recurring feasts which the seasons brought round ; the pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday, when the shepherd and his helpers rejoiced over the success of the lambing season ; the plum-pudding supper in April, when the spring corn was sown ; club

feasts at Whitsuntide and teas in hay harvest ; and, best of all, the harvest home when the last load of corn was in, and master and men, wives and children sat round the groaning board and made the rafters ring with song.

Festivals such as these are long since things of the past, and gone, too, before the steady march of competition, is much of the prosperity of the country towns. As we shall see later, Banbury, Witney, Woodstock, Chipping Norton, and Henley were still advancing in prosperity, but most of the other towns had reached the high-water mark of progress, while some of them, as Deddington, Dorchester, and Eynsham, were sensibly declining in importance. The roads were ill-repaired and unsafe, some towns having no regular track leading to them. Woods and forests abounded, and, to the difficulties of unrepaired roads, often little less than quagmires, was added danger from robbers and thieves, who infested the countryside.

II. The Plague and its Consequences

Oxford itself can scarcely be said to have made any very great progress in material prosperity during the century which had just passed by. The University had been steadily gaining ground in its contest with the city, securing from Henry VIII in 1523 a charter which placed the greater part of the city at its mercy. It received the power of incorporating any trade, and all persons privileged under this regulation were exempted from having to apply to the city authorities for permission to carry on their business. At the same time the less favoured tradesmen outside the University incorporation were subject to heavy charges for the privilege of retailing their wares, a regulation which pressed hardly upon them since the University was their chief customer. These continually recurring conflicts led to frequent appeals to the king on the part of the civic authorities, but the influential friends of the University usually brought about an issue favourable to the interests of their own side.

Another disadvantage against which the city had to contend was the frequent attacks of the plague, which were fostered by the unsanitary condition of the city. Between 1500 and 1540 visitations of this terrible scourge followed each other in rapid succession, and one attack in 1577 seems to have been particularly severe. A tablet fixed on the outside of the eastern wall of the County Hall records that " Near this spot stood the ancient Shire Hall, unhappily famous in History as the scene in July, 1577, of the Black Assize, where a malignant disease known as Gaol fever caused the death within 40 days of the Lord Chief Baron (Sir Robert Bell), the High Sheriff (Sir Robert D'Oyly) of Merton, and about three hundred more. The malady from the stench of the prisoners developed itself during the trial of one Rowland Jenkes, a saucy, foul-mouthed bookseller, for scandalous words uttered against the Queen."

To secure their safety against the terrors of pestilence most of the colleges provided themselves with residences in the surrounding villages and towns, to which they migrated whenever danger threatened. Thus, Corpus had such a building at Witney, where a house still called " the College " commemorates, at least in name, this unhappy necessity. Trinity had its resort at Garsington, while Durham College, the foundation out of which it sprang, went to Handborough. Oriel had St. Bartholomew's Hospital at Cowley, All Souls compelled its tenants at Stanton Harcourt Parsonage to take in its fellows when necessary, while Magdalen went to Brackley or to various other towns in which it had accommodation. Great bonfires were frequently lighted in the streets to ward off infection, and often on the high roads when it was feared that contagion might spread from town to town.

It was with a view, perhaps, of doing something to counteract these frequent scourges that arrangements were made, in 1616, for supplying the city with water uncontaminated by local sewage. The springs on the hill above North Hinksey were collected and brought in pipes made of hollow elm to Carfax, where Otho Nicholson, of Christ Church, built a large stone conduit for its reception.

In spite of many complaints as to the inconvenience of its position, the conduit remained till 1787, when it was presented to the Earl of Harcourt, who transferred it to his park at Nuneham. There it may still be seen, with its donor's initials, O. N., carved on the parapet.

Among the other local improvements of the time may be mentioned the attempt to keep the river open for

Carfax Conduit

navigation as far as Oxford. An Act of Parliament was obtained in 1624 providing for " the opening of the river from Burcote by Abingdon to Oxford for the benefit of the University and City ". Previously the water had been kept back by falls, similar in principle to the more modern weirs, but it was no easy matter to haul up a barge by means of a capstan fixed on the bank, and often dangerous when the boat had to pass down stream. Now, single-gate locks were placed at Iffley, Sandford and at Culham " in the swift ditch ", and traffic to Oxford was re-opened on August 31, 1635.

III. The Bodleian Library

Although the early part of the Stuart period can scarcely be called a time of prosperity for the city, it was nevertheless marked by far-reaching and important changes and developments in the University. And, first in order of chronology, came the establishment of that library which was destined to become one of the most famous in the world. As we have already seen, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, son of Henry IV, had materially assisted in building over the Divinity School the room which still bears his name. Nearly all the valuable books and manuscripts with which he had stocked it had fallen a prey to the destruction of Edward VI's commissioners, and even the shelves and stalls had been sold. Such a scene of desolation appealed strongly to Sir Thomas Bodley, himself an accomplished scholar, linguist, and diplomatist. An Exeter man by birth, he had spent the early years of his life at Geneva, to which town his parents fled before the terror of the Marian persecution. At this famous home of learning he acquired a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, and when, on the accession of Elizabeth, circumstances permitted the family to return home, he carved out for himself a distinguished career at Oxford. Equally distinguished in the world, he became an ambassador, and was entrusted with several important missions. Finally, finding himself out of sympathy with the intrigues of political life, he decided to devote himself to furthering the interests of the University. As he says, "Whereupon examining exactly for the rest of my life what course I might take, and having sought, as I thought, all the ways to the wood, to select the most proper, I concluded at the last to set up my staff at the library door in Oxford."

So Bodley set to work to make Duke Humphrey's library live again. First of all the room was repaired, the beautiful roof redecorated with its panels containing the University arms, and seats and shelves provided. Then he set to work to influence his numerous wealthy friends

THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, FROM EXETER COLLEGE GARDENS

to present books to the library, while he himself spent large sums in securing valuable volumes both at home and abroad. But perhaps the most serviceable asset which he acquired was the arrangement with the Stationers' Company in London to present to his library a copy of every book registered by them. This privilege, since merged in the Copyright Act, survives to the present day, and now between sixty and seventy thousand volumes are added to the library every year. Finally, with a noble generosity, he provided endowments by which, in after years, the treasures which he had accumulated might receive constant and watchful care.

The library was opened with a solemn procession in 1602, and a little later King James granted letters patent naming it after its founder " the Bodleian Library ".

In 1605, while the court was at Woodstock, King James himself visited the Bodleian and examined its treasures, declaring, as he left, that if at any time fate should make him a captive, he would wish to be shut up in it as his prison, to be bound with its chains, and to consume his days among its books as his fellows in captivity. Later on, in 1620, he presented to the library a folio copy of his own works.

During the period 1571–1624 three new colleges were built in Oxford. Just as Trinity and St. John's commemorated the religious reaction under Mary, so Jesus was the first Protestant society established in the University. Queen Elizabeth interested herself in its foundation to the extent of granting timber from the royal forests of Stow and Shotover, and by allowing herself to be nominated as founder. Although no restrictions as to nationality occur in the charter of incorporation, Jesus has always been from the outset the college most favoured by Welshmen, and many illustrious sons of the Principality figure among her famous men.

Duke Humphrey's Library

IV. Wadham and Pembroke

Under the rule of James I two more colleges were founded, Wadham in 1609, and Pembroke in 1624. In one respect at least Wadham differs from all the other colleges which preceded it; while they from time to time have been subject to rebuilding and restoration, it alone

Wadham Hall (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

stands practically in the same form as it appeared at its foundation three hundred years ago. Nicholas Wadham, its founder, being childless, had long contemplated the establishment of a college, and during the later years of his life accumulated money for that purpose. He died, however, before doing more than outline his plans, leaving to his wife, Dorothy, the duty of carrying out his wishes. Accordingly, the site which was originally occupied by the

old Augustinian friary was purchased from the city of Oxford for £600, and in 1610 the foundation stone of the new college was laid with due ceremony. Just as New College provides us with the most perfect example of the earliest colleges, so Wadham is the best type of the latest. Standing under the main gateway, and looking into the big quadrangle, one sees the college hall forming a portion of the opposite side ; the remaining buildings are devoted to the accommodation of the students, except in the north-west corner, where the warden's lodgings are situated. The northern and southern sides of the quadrangle are continued outwards, the chapel forming the northern extension and the library the southern. Both hall and chapel are beautiful buildings, the hall, particularly, being inferior only to that of Christ Church.

The peculiar interest attached to Pembroke College lies in the fact that its founder was essentially a local man. Thomas Tesdale was a successful merchant, who, first as contractor for clothing to Queen Elizabeth's army, and afterwards as a maltster at Abingdon, amassed a considerable fortune. Then he bought an estate at Glympton, near Woodstock, and further added to his wealth by farming, and trading in wool. In 1610 he died, leaving by his will £5,000 for founding fellowships and scholarships from Abingdon at some college in Oxford. Shortly afterwards, however, a second great legacy fell to Abingdon School, and then the corporation of the town determined to apply Tesdale's money to found a college of their own. Accordingly the old Broadgates Hall in St. Aldate's was secured, and, by letters patent under James I, converted, in 1624, into Pembroke College, that name being adopted out of compliment to the Earl of Pembroke, then Chancellor of the University. With the name of Pembroke will always be associated that of Dr. Johnson, famous alike as an author and wit, and that of George Whitefield, who played such a conspicuous part in the religious revival of the eighteenth century.

V. William Laud

One of the most conspicuous names both in the history of the University and of the country is that of William Laud, and to his life's work we must now turn our attention for a short time. Entering St. John's College as a scholar in 1590, he became a Fellow three years later. In 1604 he was elected one of the Proctors and soon began to give

The Inner Quad, St. John's College
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

evidence of his sympathy with High Church principles, when, in 1606, he was censured by the Vice-Chancellor for " divers passages savouring of Popery " which he had let fall in a sermon preached at St. Mary's. From 1611 to 1621 he was President of his college, and then promotion came to him by rapid stages. From the presidency of his college Laud became Bishop of St. David's in 1621, Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1626, Bishop of London 1628, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Mean-

while he had been elected Chancellor of the University in 1630, and then began the series of reforms which have rendered his name famous in Oxford. His first important reform was to adopt measures by which the strong party feeling which attended the election of proctors might be removed. Previously, the division of the students into northern and southern factions had rendered it expedient that one proctor should be chosen from each party, an arrangement which, though effective for its purpose, nevertheless gave rise to considerable race-rivalry and rioting when the periodical elections took place. To obviate this Laud introduced a method by which each college in turn, and in accordance with a fixed cycle, should nominate one proctor.

The most important reform carried out by the new Chancellor, however, was the complete revision of the University Statutes, and so successfully was this work effected that the Laudian Statutes, as they were called, were destined to govern the University for more than two hundred years. The old disputations were abolished, and a system of examinations introduced in their stead; the studies required for a degree were reorganized, and the supreme power in the University placed in the hands of the colleges and the Heads of Houses.

In addition to many generous benefactions to the University, Laud also left his mark upon its buildings. To his own college of St. John's he gave the inner quadrangle and the beautiful library, the buildings of which were opened by the king and queen in 1636. He also built the Convocation House behind the Divinity School, and, through his chaplain, Dr. Owen, set up the beautiful south porch of St. Mary's Church, adorned with an image of the Virgin and Child. This last erection gave great offence to the Puritans, and figured as one of the articles of indictment against him when the Parliament determined to bring him to trial in 1645.

VI. The Threatenings of the Storm

And now we must turn our attention to the circumstances which were rapidly combining to bring about the disastrous war that was soon to bring sorrow and desolation to many a happy home.

The eleven years of arbitrary government which followed Charles's acknowledgement of the Petition of Right, his fatal persistence in the doctrine of the Divine right of kings, and the subterfuges adopted under the guidance of Strafford and Noy to obtain money without the consent of Parliament, were gradually estranging the hearts of the people. The crisis came when Charles persisted in his unconstitutional demand for ship-money. Little notice was taken when the king, in 1634, levied the tax on the seaports on the plea of protecting English commerce against the Algerine pirates. Next year, however, a new writ of ship-money was sent out, and this time the tax was levied upon inland towns as well. Again the money was paid, although with some grumbling, but when, for the third time in succession, a new levy was ordered, it became clear that the king was using the tax as an unconstitutional means of raising money. Not that the tax pressed hardly on any county or was unevenly applied. The returns for our own county show that Oxfordshire was expected to provide a ship of two hundred and eighty tons burden, with a hundred and twelve men and their necessary equipment, or, as an equivalent, the sum of £3,500. The amounts allotted to some of the towns are interesting, as giving an idea of their relative importance. Thus :—

City of Oxforde	£100
Towne of Burforde	£40
Burrough and parish of Banbury . .	£40
Burrough or towne of Chipping Norton .	£33
Town of Henley upon Thames . . .	£60
Burrough of Woodstocke	£20

It was not so much the tax itself to which the people

objected as the principle involved, and, with the third attempt to enforce it, active resistance immediately began. John Hampden refused to pay on the ground that the king had no right to levy it.

The case came up for trial in 1637, and out of twelve judges present at the trial seven decided in favour of the king. The king had gained his point, but the country was stirred to its very depths, and settled down with increased determination to resist the royal encroachment upon constitutional rights.

From that time forward it began to be more and more apparent that the great struggle between royal supremacy and the rights of the people could only be settled by an appeal to arms. The possibility of such an issue seems to have been actively engaging the minds of the parliamentary leaders, and frequent meetings for its discussion took place at Lord Saye and Sele's castle at Broughton, near Banbury. Here, during 1640 and 1641, there were constant meetings of the Puritan leaders, among whom were to be frequently seen John Hampden, Pym, St. John, Sir Harry Vane the younger, Nathaniel Fiennes, the son of Lord Saye, and Lords Brook, Holland, Bedford, Essex, and Warwick. The castle, which was originally built in the reign of Edward II, preserves, in its oldest portion, many interesting relics of the time when defence was a matter of supreme importance, such as the ancient tower with its loopholes, the Gothic windows, and the battlemented walls. To this, in the middle of the sixteenth century, was added the more modern portion of the building, and although it could not claim to be a place capable of very strong resistance, yet its solid walls, surrounded by the moat, and cut off from all access except by the bridge, with its strong gate-house, gave it a formidable appearance.

Here, in a small room at the top of the house, still called the "Council Chamber", to which access could be obtained direct from the grounds, the Roundhead leaders met in secret to discuss the chances of the future. As Anthony Wood says, "So it was that several years before the Civil War began, he (Lord Saye), being looked upon as

the godfather of that party, had meetings of them in his house at Broughton where was a room, and passage thereunto, which his servants were prohibited to come near: and when they were of a complete number there would be great noises and talkings heard among them, to the admiration of those that lived in the house, yet could they never discern their lord's companions."

In the spring of 1640 the circumstances of the king were

Broughton Castle

at so low an ebb that he was compelled to call a parliament, but in three weeks, the Short Parliament, as it was called, was dissolved.

Among the Oxfordshire representatives were the Hon. Nathaniel Fiennes for Banbury; Sir Thomas Roe and John Selden for the University; the Earl of Berkshire, John Doyly, John Smith, and Alderman Nixon, for Oxford city; the Hon. John Fiennes and Viscount Wenman for the county; and for the Borough of Woodstock, William Lenthall. This William Lenthall is said to have been

born at Henley-on-Thames, at any rate the entry of his baptism occurs in the parish register, dated July 4, 1591. Receiving his early education at Thame School, he proceeded in due course to the University, entering St. Alban Hall in 1607. On going into the world he rapidly established for himself the reputation of one of the foremost lawyers of the day, and, as circumstances prospered with him, purchased in succession the Manor of Besselsleigh and Burford Priory. At the opening of the Long Parliament Charles had nominated Sir Thomas Gardyner, Recorder of London, as Speaker of the House of Commons; but the parliament, in no mood to submit to any of the king's commands, thrust him on one side and elected Lenthall as their Speaker, a post which he occupied under successive parliaments till the Restoration.

On January 4, 1642, the king suddenly came down to the House with an armed retinue of three or four hundred men, intending to arrest the five chiefs of the Puritan party, Pym, Hampden, Holles, Hazlerig, and Strode. On entering the House Charles asked the Speaker if the five members were there. Lenthall, instinctively expressing the feelings of the Commons, replied that "he had neither eyes nor tongue to see or say anything save what the House commanded him". The members were not there, and with the rejoinder, "I think my eyes are as good as another's" the king left the House. The end was come at last; the next six months were occupied by both sides in preparation for war, and on August 22, for good or for ill, Charles's standard was unfurled at Nottingham, and the Civil War began.

CHAPTER X

THE CIVIL WAR

I. The County in Arms

The abortive attempt to arrest the five members brought to the king nothing but humiliation; the Parliament was openly triumphant, and in a few days Charles retired from the capital never to enter it again until he was brought there for trial.

In the subsequent development of events Oxford became the Royalist capital, and for three years Oxfordshire played a more important part in the history of the nation than had ever fallen to her lot before.

With ready promptitude the Parliament passed an Act securing for themselves the appointment of the lords-lieutenant and thus the control of the militia. To these acts of defiance Charles replied by issuing to the counties his "Commissions of Array" for the purpose of securing men, arms, and money, while the queen was dispatched to Holland with the crown jewels to purchase additional supplies.

In Oxfordshire the authority of the Parliament was represented by Lord Saye and Sele as lord-lieutenant, while John Hampden was conspicuous as one of his most important deputies. The king on the other hand had the support of a large number of noblemen and gentlemen of great influence and wide estate, chief of whom was the Earl of Northampton, whose estate at Compton Wynyates was situated just over the border in Warwickshire.

In spite of all Charles's efforts it was a very moderate following which attended the unfurling of the royal standard at Nottingham on August 22, 1642. The Earl

of Essex, to whom the Parliament had committed the command of its forces, had indeed succeeded in getting together a considerable army of foot and horse, but both sides were miserably equipped, depending to a large extent on old fashioned arms and agricultural implements hastily converted into weapons of war.

Now in endeavouring to understand the progress of events in any war it is necessary, as far as possible, to discover the motive actuating the generals on either side, and to trace the means by which they strove to bring their purpose to a successful issue. In the opening stages of the Civil War this is by no means easy, for all over the country the two parties were intermingled one with another, and minor conflicts frequently occurred as the natural result of mutual hostility ; as the armies settled down into well-defined camps, however, it is easier to trace the progress of events ; and with Oxford as the Royalist head quarters, the interest attached to our own neighbourhood is naturally very considerable.

Among the preliminary skirmishes was a conflict at Banbury between Lord Brooke, a strong Puritan, and the Earl of Northampton. Brooke had got as far as Banbury with a convoy of guns to be used in defence of Warwick Castle, when Northampton, hearing of his arrival, appeared upon the scene. In the end the latter secured the guns without bloodshed, and carried them off to attack the place they were intended to defend. John Hampden, too, was on the alert in the Chiltern country, which he knew so well, and when the Earl of Berkshire and the other Commissioners of the king put up at Sir Robert Dormer's house, he promptly arrested them and sent them to London as prisoners. In his subsequent choice of Oxford for a capital Charles was largely influenced by the well-known loyalty of the University, a loyalty which early found expression in the constant drilling of the scholars in the college quadrangles. At the king's command Sir John Biron with his regiment of horse arrived in the city to assist in its defence, but soon after passed on to Worcester to swell the main army, taking with him about a hundred of the scholars

as volunteers. On September 14 Lord Saye occupied Oxford with some idea of making it a Parliamentary garrison, but ultimately, with a strange lack of judgement, decided to the contrary, deeming it improbable that the king would settle there. His soldiers, however, vented their spleen by shattering the heads of the Virgin and Child over St. Mary's porch, while their leader carried off with him a trunk full of the Christ Church plate.

The Virgin Porch

Meanwhile Essex had been instructed to follow the king "and by battle or other way rescue him from his perfidious counsellors and restore him to the Parliament." Charles on the other hand had determined on striking a decisive blow at London, and with this object in view traversed the midland counties as far as Shrewsbury, rallying new forces as he went, and then turning southwards toward the capital.

On the night of October 22 the king took up his quarters at Mr. Toby Chauncy's mansion at Edgcott, the main army being encamped on the southern side of the Cherwell between Edgcott and Cropredy, while Prince Rupert with the rear guard held Wormleighton some five miles away. The same night a council of war was held at Edgcott, and no news having been received of Essex, it was determined to halt on the following day (Sunday) while Sir Nicholas Byron with his brigade attempted the capture of Banbury Castle. With the early morning, however, Rupert's scouts brought the intelligence that Essex had managed to reach Kineton during the night, at which information Charles immediately dispatched his troops to take possession of the crest of Edgehill some five miles away, and within three miles of the Parliamentary forces. The ridge of Edgehill forms the northern boundary of the table-land of north Oxfordshire, and from its crest slopes steeply away towards the Vale of the Red Horse. At the point first occupied by the king's forces the hill has two faces, one to the north-west and the other to the north-east, the central point known as Bullet Hill commanding an extensive view over the plain of Warwickshire with Kineton and Essex's forces in the near distance. A stronger position than this for an army cannot well be conceived, and had the king decided to wait the enemy's attack on the brow of the hill, it is quite likely that the battle would have brought him a decisive victory. At the time when the army of the Parliament was thus on the brink of action some of its best regiments, including Hampden's, were a day's march in the rear in charge of the greater part of the ammunition and artillery, leaving Essex with a force of some 12,000 men to meet the king, whose army was superior to the extent of 2,000 infantry and sixteen troops of horse. Rupert, as ever, impatient of delay, and tempted by the opportunity which the level plain below afforded for the action of his cavalry, urged an immediate descent upon the enemy, and, in spite of prudent counsels from more experienced generals, succeeded in carrying his point.

The king first rode along the line clad in steel, encouraging the troops by his presence. Among his generals was the brave Sir Jacob Astley whose prayer is said to have been, "O Lord! Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee do not Thou forget me. March on, boys!" The advancing line consisted of the main body of the infantry in the centre under the command of General Ruthven, with Lord Wilmot's cavalry on the left and Prince Rupert's on the right.

By three o'clock in the afternoon the engagement had begun, and Rupert, with characteristic dash, had succeeded in driving before him the ill-disciplined troops on the left wing of the enemy's line. Instead of promptly turning and assisting in the attack on Essex's centre, he allowed his men to chase the broken left wing back to Kineton, and there waste their time in pillaging the baggage wagons of the Parliamentary army. When in excuse of his lack of judgement he declared that he could give a good account of the enemy's horse, a cavalier is said to have replied, "Ay, by Heavens, and of their carts too." Meanwhile the more highly trained troops in the centre of Essex's line had succeeded in throwing the king's guards into confusion, and in effecting an opportunity for the cavalry on the right wing to charge furiously against them. By this time Hampden, by forced marches, had managed to arrive on the scene of action, and when Rupert returned from the pillage at Kineton it was to find his way barred by the newly arrived regiments. As it was, the Royal army was now so severely pressed in front and on its left, that not only had all hope of victory completely vanished, but defeat was scarcely averted by the early close of the autumn day. Reliable authorities compute the total loss of life at somewhere about a thousand men, the Parliamentarians suffering most among the private soldiers; the king's army in persons of distinction.

In spite of urgent entreaties to the contrary Essex refrained from following up whatever advantage he had secured, and next day began a retreat on Warwick, from whence by way of Towcester and St. Albans he

ultimately withdrew to the capital. With the main road to the capital open before him, Charles might easily have reached London first, but other counsels seem to have prevailed, and he set to work to take Broughton Castle and Banbury. Both places made the feeblest show of resistance, Broughton surrendering after a day's opposition, and the garrison of 800 men in Banbury

Plan showing Fortifications of Oxford

Castle capitulating at the first shot. The command of the castle was put in the hands of the Earl of Northampton, and the king, after appropriating whatever supplies the town of Banbury afforded, marched on Oxford, which was reached on the 29th. From that time Oxford became the head quarters of the Royalist army and the asylum of Charles's court. As a boy the king had frequently visited Woodstock with his father, and no doubt had often been at Oxford. Again, in the first year of his reign, when an outbreak of plague had driven the Parliament from London, Charles had been lodged at Christ Church. Other official visits were paid in 1629 and in

1636, at the latter of which he opened Laud's new buildings at St. John's College. Such visits had taught him that the loyalty of the University, at any rate, could be depended upon, and steps were promptly taken to put the town in a defensible condition.

As early as August many of the scholars had been under arms, and drilling had been regularly carried on in the college quadrangles. With the arrival of the king measures were actively taken to set up a complete line of fortifications. A series of earthworks with sharp angles was commenced to run from the Cherwell at Holywell Mill, past the north side of Wadham and St. John's, to the Thames at Walton Bridge. At first the citizens were pressed into the service, but as they proved either inattentive or unwilling, it became necessary to obtain further help. The colleges were required to provide men to work at the trenches, but that, too, proving insufficient, the members of the colleges themselves were called upon to take an active part in the work.

The tower and cloister of New College were converted into stores for arms and ammunition; gunpowder was manufactured at Osney Mill; the law and logic schools became a granary for corn, while the master tailors set up a department in the music and astronomy schools for the supply of uniforms. New Inn Hall became the royal mint, and here the plate from the colleges and private persons was melted down to be struck into coin for the king's service. In all, the colleges seem to have supplied two thousand pounds' weight of silver under promise of repayment when the king should come to his own again.

II. The Campaign of 1643

Before entering on an account of the events of 1643 so far as they concern our own county, we must endeavour to understand the general position of the opposing forces at the beginning of the year. The portion of the country distinctly loyal to the king included the greater part

THE SCHOOLS QUADRANGLE

of the northern counties; Wales, with Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, and part of Oxfordshire; and Cornwall and some portion of Devon. In the remainder of the country the Parliament was predominant, and since their sphere of influence included all the chief seaports of the time except Newcastle, it became essential for the king to extend his power in the north and west in order to facilitate communication with the continent, from whence he was hoping to receive assistance and supplies.

The year opened with a skirmish at Burford between Sir John Biron and some Parliamentary dragoons on January 2. Biron had already taken up his quarters in the town when a party of dragoons appeared from Cirencester, as little expecting to find enemies as they themselves were expected. After a sharp tussle the dragoons were driven off leaving Sir John free to continue his march on Oxford.

In accordance with the general plan of campaign, Rupert now made a series of raids on the west, the ultimate purpose of which was to capture the important seaports of Bristol and Gloucester. On January 7 he made an unsuccessful attack on Cirencester, but repeating the attempt on February 2, he captured the town and garrisoned it for the king. Following up his victory he threatened Bristol on March 7, but the time of its fall was not yet.

Meanwhile the Parliament were maturing plans for an attack on Oxford; on April 15, Essex laid siege to Reading which capitulated on the 26th, but not before an attempt by the king to relieve it had been successfully beaten off. In the development of his plans the Parliamentary leader advanced northwards and took up his head quarters at Thame on June 10, leaving outposts at Chinnor, Bledlow, Stokenchurch and Wycombe to protect his rear. With the view probably of securing the passage of the Cherwell Essex made an attack on Islip, but had to retire without effecting his purpose. As a reply to this, on the next day, June 18, Prince Rupert made one of his characteristic dashes on

the enemy's lines at Postcombe and Chinnor with the further hope of capturing a convoy which was bringing £21,000 from London to Essex's army. At four o'clock in the afternoon of the preceding day his trumpets sounded to horse, and before long his troopers were riding over Magdalen Bridge on their way to Shotover Hill and Wheatley. An hour after midnight the tramp of his horses was heard by the sentinels at Wheatley, and by three o'clock the attack on Postcombe had begun. The single troop of Parliamentary horse holding the village quickly retired, and Rupert pursued his course to Chinnor two miles off. Here a much stronger party of the Parliamentary forces was quartered, but not too strong for the impetuous Royalist leader. Dismounting the four squadrons of his first regiment, he attacked the village on foot, leaving the remainder of his cavalry to watch the vicinity and capture fugitives. A fierce fight ensued in which Rupert was entirely successful, killing fifty of the enemy and capturing a hundred and twenty prisoners. It was now too late to carry the raid further, and the convoy having succeeded in evading his attack, he set fire to the village and prepared to return with his booty and prisoners. To get home the river Thame must be crossed either by the bridge at Wheatley or by that at Chislehampton. By this time there was little chance of Wheatley Bridge being unoccupied by Essex's troops, and Rupert accordingly decided to return by way of Chalgrove and Chislehampton.

But he had reckoned without the vigilance of John Hampden, to whom the scattered arrangement of the Parliamentary outposts had long been a matter of concern. The night before, Hampden lay at Watlington, and at the first alarm of danger sent off a mounted trooper to Essex urging him to send a force to hold Chislehampton Bridge. He himself, with a troop of Sheffield's horse and some of Gunter's dragoons, hastened to intercept Rupert and to hold him till reinforcements came. By the time the Royalist band appeared Hampden was joined by four more troops of horse from Easington and Thame, and Rupert saw at once that his passage

was to be disputed. Tired though his troopers were, he drew them up in line and prepared to charge. At their first fierce onset the Parliamentary troops gave way and, although they fought with obstinate courage, they were unable to resist Rupert's impetuous rushes. Early in the conflict Hampden was seen to ride off the field. Struck in the shoulder by a brace of carbine bullets, and with his arm hanging helpless by his side,

HAMPDEN'S MONUMENT
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

he at first set out to the home of his first wife at Pyrton, but finding the way blocked by Rupert's dragoons, he turned his horse's head northward in the hope of reaching Thame. After a painful journey he succeeded in his purpose and secured shelter in the house of Ezekiel Browne. The doctor at first held out hopes of his recovery, but Hampden realized only too well that the end was near. After six days of suffering he passed away with a prayer for his unhappy country on his lips. The monument erected on the field of battle a hundred years

later commemorates the devoted bravery of this noble man.

Rupert's victory at Chalgrove had the immediate result of causing Essex to withdraw his forces from Wheatley, and to establish his head quarters first at Aylesbury and later at Great Brickhill, near Bletchley. The retreat of Essex at this particular juncture was of the greatest value to the king, for the queen was daily expected from Newark with a large convoy of ammunition and arms. On July 11 Rupert succeeded in meeting her in Stratford, and safely escorted her to Oxford where she was received with general rejoicing. Rooms were prepared for her in Merton College, and the amusements and gaieties with which the University abounded were redoubled.

Meanwhile in the west country the tide had turned in favour of the Royalists. Waller was beaten at Roundway Down, and his defeat led to the capture of Bristol, which followed immediately after. Thus a most useful port for communication with the continent fell into the king's hands, a victory which he endeavoured to follow up by the capture of Gloucester. But here he had to reckon with Essex, who, starting across country from Aylesbury, compelled him to raise the siege. Charles retired on Oxford, and Essex withdrew to London by way of Wiltshire and Berkshire. The opportunity of intercepting his march was too good to be lost, and the Royal forces set out at once by way of Wantage in the direction of Essex's route, and ultimately came up with him at Newbury. The battle was inconclusive in its issue, and Essex was able to continue his march on Reading, but there fell in the fight, in the person of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, one of Oxfordshire's most famous sons. The grandson of Sir Lawrence Tanfield, Falkland had inherited through his mother Burford Priory and an estate at Great Tew. It was, however, at the old house at Great Tew that he was best known, for here he gathered together many of the literary celebrities of the day, among whom were Ben Jonson and Cowley. Scholars from Oxford, fifteen miles away,

gladly visited his hospitable home, and were delighted with the depth of his learning and the charm of his conversation. As Secretary of State to the king he took an active part in the Royalist fortunes, and, although no soldier in the strict sense of the word, loyally placed his life at the disposal of his sovereign. His body was brought back to Great Tew and hurriedly buried by night, but it was not till 1885 that a tablet was erected to the memory of a man universally beloved for his virtue and learning.

III. The Campaign of 1644

The general result of the campaign of 1643 was eminently favourable to the king. Not only had he attained his purpose in securing for his forces ports of communication in the west, but with the close of the year he reoccupied Reading, and thus completed a line of outposts round his head quarters at Oxford. Reading, Wallingford, Abingdon, Boarstall, Islip, and Woodstock, were all occupied by the king's troops, shielding the city from attacks on the east, while the Royal garrison in Banbury Castle was a constant menace to the Parliamentary generals on the north. With such a bright outlook the king anticipated an offensive campaign during the coming year, but his hopes were not to be realized. Dissatisfied with Essex's feeble advance against Oxford in 1643 the Parliament decided to make a determined effort to capture the king in his stronghold, and for this purpose two armies were equipped, one under Essex and the other under Sir William Waller. This new demonstration considerably affected Charles's plans; either he must strengthen his outposts around the city by strongly garrisoning Reading, Wallingford, and Abingdon, or he must concentrate his scattered forces at Oxford in order to form a powerful field-army. In the end the latter plan was generally adopted, the garrisons from Reading, Boarstall, and Abingdon being withdrawn, and the fortifications dismantled. The Parliamentary generals

now set to work to invest the city, and for this purpose Essex occupied Abingdon, while Waller advanced further into Berkshire with the hope of getting to the west and north of the city. Meanwhile the king waited within his lines for an opportunity of fighting Essex or Waller separately, disposing his army so as to prevent the enemy from crossing the Isis or Cherwell. In spite of his watchfulness the army of Essex succeeded in effecting a crossing at Sandford Ferry and went into quarters at Islip. The church close at Sandford still bears marks of the earthworks upon which Essex planted his artillery to protect the crossing. As the Roundhead troops filed over Bullingdon Green, Charles watched their progress from the top of Magdalen tower, the intervening space having been denuded of its trees in order to remove any cover near the town.

With Essex on the east side of the town and separated from Waller by the river, the King decided to attack the latter general and accordingly marched on Abingdon, but Waller eluded the attempt and succeeded in effecting a crossing at Newbridge, doubling back immediately after to take up his quarters at Eynsham. It was now imperatively necessary for Charles to prevent the junction of the two armies on the north of the town, where it was most easily assailable, and consequently Sir Jacob Astley was dispatched to secure Gosford Bridge near Islip, where Essex was expected to cross the Cherwell. There was now every prospect of the city being subjected to a prolonged siege, for which its resources were by no means adequate. Charles, therefore, decided on a bold move. Having directed a feint to be made upon Abingdon, to distract Waller's attention, and leaving his ordnance and colours before the fortifications, he quietly marched out of his quarters on the night of June 3, with 3,000 horse and 2,500 foot. Leaving the city by the Bocardo gate, he traversed Port Meadow, and making a wide circuit by way of Wolvercote, Yarnton, and Handborough succeeded in reaching Burford without coming in contact with the enemy. From thence, after a short rest, he reached Bourton-on-the-Water the same night, and, being now

well in advance of the Roundheads, gave his men a much-needed rest.

The two Parliamentary generals at first started in pursuit, but ultimately agreed that Waller should continue to follow the king, while Essex marched to subdue the west of England, and to prevent any combination of the Royalist forces in that direction. Charles continued his march to Worcester, but hearing that Waller had reached Evesham, he maintained his course to Bewdley and Bridgnorth, giving the Parliamentary general the idea that he was making for Shrewsbury. The king, however, doubled back, and, entering the county by way of Burford, rejoined the rest of his troops at Woodstock, thus raising his army to 5,500 foot and 4,000 horse. He was now in a position to meet Waller, who was returning in pursuit by way of Gloucester, and Shipston-on-Stour, ultimately reaching Kineton. With this purpose in view the king marched northward to Buckingham and Brackley, and hearing, on the morning of June 28, that Waller was in the neighbourhood, continued his march to Banbury. In the afternoon of the same day the Parliamentary forces were located at Hanwell Warren, about three miles from Banbury, and the king at once determined on taking possession of Crouch Hill, the main position of advantage in the neighbourhood. But to do this his forces had to file over Banbury Bridge and through the town, a task which considerably delayed his march, and Waller, who was nearer, had no difficulty in getting to the coveted position first.

Thwarted in his purpose, the king withdrew once more to the eastern side of the Cherwell, and struck off along the road to Daventry in order, if possible, to draw Waller off. The Parliamentary general promptly followed on his side of the river, whereupon the king sent on ahead a troop of dragoons to hold Cropredy Bridge. Waller immediately replied by dispatching a large force, which had no difficulty in forcing the passage of the bridge, and at the same time ordered 1,000 horse to ford the river lower down at Slate Mill, with the purpose of falling on the king's rear. Both attacks,

however, failed, and Waller's men were driven back across the river with considerable loss, 600 men being said to have been killed and 700 taken prisoners. The defeat had such a demoralizing effect upon Waller's army that for the time his force became inoperative, and Charles was able to withdraw towards Evesham to secure supplies for his men. Thus the game of war played between Charles and Waller, which began with the march out of Oxford on June 3, and ended with Cropredy Bridge on the 29th, resulted in a victory for the king, who was now able to leave Oxford safely and march against Essex in the west. Throughout all these manœuvres it was obvious to the Parliamentary commanders that little success could be effected so long as Banbury Castle held out for the king; accordingly, it was decided to take steps for its capture.

On August 27 Colonel John Fiennes arrived at Banbury to commence operations against the castle, bringing with him all the disposable forces of Northamptonshire, Warwick, and Coventry. The castle was defended by Sir William Compton brother to James, Lord Compton, who had become Earl of Northampton on his father's death at Hopton Heath. Colonel Fiennes at once dispatched a trumpeter to summon the castle to surrender, to whom Sir William Compton, then only a youth of nineteen, replied that " they kept the castle for his Majesty, and as long as one man was left alive in it, willed them not to expect to have it delivered ". Colonel Fiennes made a big attempt to carry the castle by storm on the 23rd of September, but after a struggle lasting the whole day he was hopelessly beaten off with considerable loss. As evening fell he sent a trumpeter " to desire the bodies of the dead ", a request which was granted upon condition that " those which had fallen within pistol shot of the castle should be stripped by those of the garrison and delivered naked in the market-place, which was done accordingly ".

Meanwhile the king was marching towards Newbury to meet the enemy there for the second time, and received on the way urgent appeals from the garrison to send assistance before it was too late. The king could little

afford to weaken his forces, nor could the appeal from Banbury be disregarded; three of his best regiments of horse were therefore dispatched together with instructions to Colonel Gage at Oxford to add to them whatever forces were available, and to hasten to the relief of the castle. The help came not a day too soon; the garrison had long been subsisting on horseflesh, and only two horses remained when Colonel Gage appeared before the castle. The besiegers held a council of war and withdrew to Warwick, leaving the garrison to welcome their friends and receive the much needed supplies. Thus ended the first siege of Banbury, the resistance to which reflected the greatest credit on the youthful governor, Sir William Compton, who is said not to have gone to bed once during the investment of the castle.

Of the other engagements of 1644 there is little need to speak here. On July 2 Rupert discovered a formidable foe in Oliver Cromwell at Marston Moor, while immediately after the relief of Banbury the army of the King suffered defeat at Newbury. Thus the year which had opened with such brilliant prospects for the Royalist cause found little progress made at its close.

IV. The Campaign of 1645

During the spring of 1645 very little fighting took place round Oxford. The Speaker's house at Besselsleigh, which had recently been occupied by the Royalists, was retaken by General Browne, while the same leader, on January 11, defeated an attempt made by Colonel Gage, the Governor of Oxford, to break down Culham Bridge. In the engagement Gage was shot through the heart with a musket bullet, and was brought home to be buried in the cathedral at Oxford.

Meanwhile the Parliament were spending the early months of the year in the organization of the New Model Army, and, in order to prevent the king from taking the field before their arrangements were complete, Cromwell was sent into Oxfordshire to interrupt the king's prepara-

tions for the campaign, and especially to hinder the transport of artillery to Worcester, where part of the Royalist army under Rupert was lying. Cromwell advanced through Watlington and Wheatley, and hearing that the Earl of Northampton's regiment was at Islip Bridge he determined to surprise it if possible. The Royalists, however, had received warning and disappeared, but, realizing the danger of letting Cromwell through, they returned next day with two more regiments to surprise him in turn. Cromwell's Ironsides, however, were superior to surprise, and putting the king's forces to flight, chased the main body of them to Bletchington, where they found refuge with the garrison commanded by Colonel Windebank in Sir Thomas Coghill's house. Cromwell promptly called upon them to surrender, a course which was adopted after prolonged discussion. According to one report, Windebank is said to have been influenced by the entreaties of his newly married wife and the ladies in the house; by another, he is said to have been the victim of a ruse on the part of Cromwell, who hastened the issue by calling out in the hearing of the garrison, "Fall on! fall on, foot!" while in reality he had no footmen with which to carry on the siege. The result, at any rate, was disastrous to Colonel Windebank, for being court-martialled for his too ready surrender, he was shot against the wall of Merton College, from which incident the walk beneath the wall has since received the name of Dead Man's Walk.

The king's policy was still to effect a junction with Rupert at Worcester, but Cromwell's activity was a constant source of delay. Sweeping round the city he routed Colonel Vaughan's regiment at Bampton, compelling the king to call up Goring and his cavalry from the west to cover his advance on Worcester, which commenced on May 8.

Meanwhile Fairfax marched from Reading on May 1 to relieve Taunton, leaving a detachment under Cromwell to join with Browne in watching the king's movements. On May 6, however, he received orders to send a detachment only to Taunton, and himself to return with the main body to besiege Oxford. By May 22 he had invested the

Dead Man's Walk

town, taking up his head quarters at Marston in the old manor house, occupied during the Civil War by Unton Croke. Although removed for the most part in 1843 and replaced by stone cottages, a portion of the old house still remains under the name of Cromwell Castle. A breastwork was thrown up on the east side of the Cherwell, and a bridge constructed near Marston, while Cromwell commanded at Wytham, and Browne at Wolvercote. By this time the king's union with Prince Rupert was completed, and together they had captured Leicester, intending then to relieve Pontefract and other northern castles, and afterwards to march south again and attack Fairfax. For the success of this plan it was necessary that Oxford should be able to hold out for some time, but at Leicester urgent appeals for relief arrived from Oxford.

On May 22 Secretary Nicholas wrote to the king, "We shall very quickly here be reduced to very great distress, having abundance of people in Oxford, and but very small provision of victuals—wherefore the Lords here do humbly beseech your Majesty presently to take the most speedy and effectual order for the relieving this place."

A body of 1,200 horse was accordingly sent to convoy to Oxford the plundered cattle collected in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, the king delaying a week near Daventry to await their return. But the delay cost him dear. Fairfax immediately raised the siege of Oxford after fifteen days' investment, and came up with the Royal forces at Naseby. The result of that memorable battle on June 14 is well known, and by August 28 Charles was back in Oxford, bringing with him two or three thousand horse, all that remained to him after Naseby fight. And now, one by one, the Royalist strongholds all over the country were falling into the hands of the Parliament. The king with Rupert and Maurice remained in Oxford during the winter, doing their best to strengthen its resources and prepare for the siege which all felt was not far off. Thus the year closed, the inevitable issue being foreshadowed by the "bad times", for the relief of which the king ordered special forms of prayer to be used in all the college chapels.

V. 1646

The spring of 1646 was occupied by the Parliament in reducing the castles which still held out for the king, and among the last to surrender were Banbury and Oxford.

The second siege of Banbury began as early as January, under the conduct of Colonel Edward Whaley, who had previously been a cornet in John Fiennes' troop. The heroic Sir William Compton was still in command of the castle, and this time there was ample store of provisions. There seems to be little evidence of any strenuous efforts being made to reduce the castle.

On March 27 Whaley summoned the garrison to surrender in the following terms :—

"For the Governor of Banbury Castle.

"Sir,

"Before I attempt anything upon you, which may occasion the effusion of Christian blood, I think it my duty (both to God and the State whose Servant I am) to send you a fair and civil summons to prevent it, and therefore demand of you the Castle for the use of the Parliament. For you now to stand out (being out of all hopes of ever having Relief) it would be but to make yourselves to embrew your hands in your own blood and cause Repentance when it is too late. I expect your answer ; and shall be if you please,

"Your friend to serve you,
"Edw. Whaley.

"Banbury the 18th of March, 1645."

To this demand the governor replied with the following letter :—

"Sir,

"I have received (by your Drum you sent to me) a letter, wherein you demand this Castle for the use of the Parliament, to whom I return this answer ; that I shall never be so false to my King, as to deliver up the

trust I have from him to Rebels : I shall therefore desire you to forbear any further frivolous summons ; for I thank God I have a loyal heart, as I shall make you sensible of in defence of this place (by God's assistance) if you make any further attempts upon it. All the Officers and Soldiers now here with me, return the same resolutions, rather choosing to lose our lives in the defence of this place, than deliver it up without his Majesty's command : I rest,

" Yours in what I may
" W. COMPTON.

" Banbury Castle the 18th of March, 1645."

With Charles's departure from Oxford and subsequent surrender of himself to the Scottish army at Newark further resistance was useless. Conditions of surrender were agreed to, and on May 8 Sir William Compton and his garrison marched out upon the most honourable terms. Soon after an Order of the House of Commons was made directing an inquiry as to the future of the castle, whether it could be dismantled without prejudice to Lord Saye's inheritance, or whether it should be demolished, and, if so, what compensation should be paid to Lord Saye. At first it was decided to destroy the fortifications only, but a petition from the townsmen of Banbury, who had had quite enough of war, ultimately secured its complete destruction, and to-day Banbury Castle is entirely a thing of the past. Lord Saye and Sele was awarded £2,000 to indemnify him for the loss, a sum made chargeable upon the money obtained by the sequestration of Royalist estates in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, and Northamptonshire.

On April 27 the king decided to leave Oxford secretly. Disguised as the servant of John Ashburnham, and accompanied by a scholar named Hudson who knew the byways well, he passed out of the East gate to the unknown fortunes which awaited him beyond. Five days later the army of Fairfax appeared once again before the city, and occupied a strong position on Headington Hill. From

his old quarters at Marston Fairfax directed the disposal of the main portion of his army on the northern side of the city, and summoned it to surrender. His letter to Sir Thomas Glemham, the Governor of Oxford, is as follows :

"May 11.

"Sir,

"I do by these summon you to deliver up the City of Oxford into my hands for the use of the Parliament. I

The East Gate

very much desire the preservation of that place, so famous for learning, from ruin which inevitably is like to fall upon it unless you concur. You may have honourable terms for yourself and all within the garrison if you reasonably accept thereof. I desire your answer this day, and remain your servant,

"Tho. Fairfax."

Meanwhile orders had been sent to the governor by the king to surrender on terms, and after preliminary negotiations at Cromwell's Castle in Marston, the treaty of capitulation was signed on June 20. On June 24 the garrison, 3,000 strong, marched out through the East gate, over Magdalen Bridge, with colours flying and drums beating, between files of the enemy extending from St. Clement's to Shotover Hill.

Already Woodstock had surrendered to Colonel Rains-

Old Magdalen Bridge

borough on April 26, and Boarstall on June 12. Anthony Wood, one of Oxford's most interesting historians, was a boy at the time, living at Thame, to which place he had been sent during the troublous times of the siege. On the surrender of Boarstall a holiday was granted, and as he tells us " many of the schoolboys went thither (four miles distant) about 8 or 9 of the clock in the morning to see the form of surrender, the strength of the garrison, and the soldiers of each party. They, and particularly Anthony

Wood, had instructions given to them before they went, that not one of them should either taste any liquor or eat any provisions in the garrison ; and the reason was for fear the Royal party who were to march out thence should mix poison amongst the liquor or provisions that they should leave there. But as Anthony Wood remembered he could not get into the garrison but stood, as hundreds did, without the works, where he saw the governor, Sir William Campion, a little man who, upon some occasion or other, laid flat on the ground on his belly to write a letter, bill, or the form of a pass, or some such thing."

With the surrender of Oxford on June 24, ended the Great Rebellion, so far as Oxfordshire was concerned, and with it closed the most dramatic episode in the whole of its history.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESTORATION AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

I. After the War

Freed from the alarms of war by the surrender of the city and the cessation of all active opposition to the parliament, Oxfordshire was now able to turn its attention to the task of remedying the disasters which three years of strife had wrought within its borders.

War is no respecter of persons or property, and the constant expeditions of the Royalist forces from their head quarters within, accompanied by the equally frequent inroads of the Parliamentary armies from without, had reduced the country to a condition of desolation which it had never known before.

The district around Banbury was subject to the exactions of the garrison on the one side, and to the demands of the Roundheads at Northampton on the other. In the *Moderate Intelligencer*, a news-sheet of the time, we read, "The country men have a pretty observation, which is this: They say they pay contribution on both sides: when Banbury men come to gather their money, they observe a time when their enemies of Northampton are at home, then they come in, and with a loud cry, say, 'Where are these Roundheads? We'll kill them all for raising money of you; you shall pay to none but us.' When Banbury men are gone, then comes the other party, 'Where are the Cavaliers? We'll kill them all; you shall pay to none but us; we will protect you.' But hardly in a year doth the one interrupt the other's collections." Banbury itself suffered terribly; as Joshua Sprigge, one of its

townsmen of the time, says, "Scarce one half was standing to gaze on the ruins of the other." With the triumph of the Roundheads, the property of the landholders who still remained loyal to the king was sequestered, while those who submitted to the new authority only retained their estates by payment of a heavy fine; but little of this money found its way into the hands of the common people. All that Banbury had was the material of the dismantled castle with which to help restore its houses, and for the purpose of rebuilding the church and steeple, the vicarage, and the gaol, three hundred pounds' worth of timber, which a malignant named Powell had appropriated from the Oxfordshire forests. And, indeed, the Oxfordshire forests had suffered tremendously. As Dr. Plot says, "The hills, 'tis true, before the late unhappy wars were well enough beset with woods, where now 'tis so scarce that 'tis a common thing to sell it by weight, and not only at Oxford, but at many other places in the northern part of the shire, where if brought to mercat, it is ordinarily sold for about one shilling the hundred, but if remote from a great town it may be had for seven pence; and thus it is everywhere but in the Chiltern Country."

Other frontier towns suffered similarly to Banbury. Thame was liable to inroads from Boarstall and Oxford on the Royalist side, while the Roundheads descended upon it from their quarters at Aylesbury; Henley was the prey alternately of the king's garrison at Wallingford and of the Puritans located within its own borders; and there was scarcely a town in the whole county which was not called upon at some time or other to find quarters for the soldiers of both parties.

And, as with the towns, so with the countryside. Farms lay desolate on all hands, homesteads wrecked and dismantled, barns empty and ruinous. The fields were neglected and uncultivated, for there was little use in sowing crops to be trampled under foot by cavalry charges or to be carried off by marauding soldiers. Nor were the churches exempt from the sacrilegious toll of war. Some of them, such as Banbury, were turned into

fortified positions ; others were used as barracks, stables, prisons, or hospitals. The lead of the roofs supplied excellent material for bullets, and even the tomb of Lord Williams at Thame was violated, and the leaden coffin used for a similar purpose. The monuments in the churches, already sadly damaged by the Commissioners of Edward VI, suffered still more at the hands of zealous Puritans. Much of the damage done was beyond all remedy, and where restoration was possible, the cost of it fell upon the people themselves.

In 1649 the Parliamentary Commissioners took possession of the royal manor of Woodstock, and eleven years after the house and park were sold for £13,581 10*s.* 6*d.*, the lead and material of the house for £1,500, the timber for £1,133 10*s.*, and the deer for £1,000. Next year the house was dismantled beyond repair, and thus came to an end a mansion which had been a home of England's sovereigns for five centuries.

II. The Levellers

The change of government from monarchy to Commonwealth was not effected without serious difficulties both near home and in the remoter portions of the country. Of Cromwell's expeditions into Ireland and Scotland we have nothing to say here, but the expulsion of the Presbyterians from Parliament by Colonel Pride had the effect of bringing into prominence an extreme republican party, who, from their desire to make all men equal, were called " Levellers ". The chief exponents of these demands were mostly obscure men in the army, and while preparations for the Irish expedition were in progress their partisans suddenly broke out into open insurrection. The leader of the Levellers in Oxfordshire was a man named Thompson, who succeeded in getting together a considerable following at Banbury, the number of which is variously estimated, but probably amounted to about 200 men. In the end he was easily defeated by Colonel Reynolds, but succeeded in escaping with a number of his confederates to the main

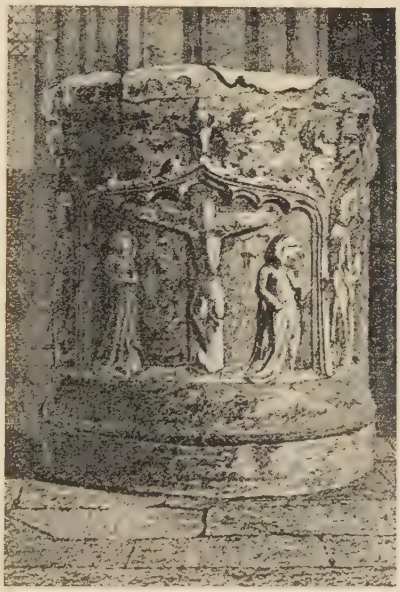
body of insurgents at Salisbury. At Oxford the mutineers were easily suppressed by Colonel Ingoldesby, the governor of the city, who shot two of them in Broken Heyes as an example to the rest, but at Salisbury it was different. There the rebels, who remained obdurate to all inducements to return to allegiance, decided to march westward, and join other disaffected regiments in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. Thereupon, Cromwell, with his characteristic promptness, set off in pursuit, and by a forced march arrived at Andover, where he hoped to intercept them. Hearing of the pursuit, the Levellers had set off to Wantage for the purpose of crossing into Oxfordshire at Newbridge, but here they found Colonel Reynolds on the watch, and were compelled to retire to Faringdon, whence they ultimately crossed the river higher up, and took up their quarters for the night at Burford. Their horses had been turned out to grass, and they themselves had retired to rest when Cromwell burst upon them at midnight. Resistance was hopeless ; many, including some of the most conspicuous leaders, escaped in the darkness, but some three or four hundred remained as prisoners, and were immediately shut up in the church.

Of these, three hundred and forty were induced to sign a petition to the general asking for leniency, and were duly pardoned, a few of the ringleaders only being exempt from mercy. "Colonel" Eyres, being a civilian, was remitted for trial at a court of law, but Cornet Thompson, a brother of the Banbury leader, Cornet Dean, and two corporals were condemned to death. Three days after the fight the prisoners were mustered on the leads of the Sylvester Chapel to see the death sentence carried out. Cornet Thompson and the two corporals were brought out one by one and endured their fate bravely ; but when Cornet Dean appeared, expecting that his end was come, he received the welcome news that he had been pardoned. Then the mutineers were brought down into the church, and admonished by Cromwell, after which they were marched to Devizes, and finally to Ireland, to take their part in the suppression of the rebellion there.

In the registers of the church is this entry :—

"1649. Three soldiers shot to death in Burford Churchyard, buried May 17."

On the font, too, scratched in the lead, and in all



The Font, Burford Church

probability a memento of the three hundred and forty, are the words

"Anthony Sedley 1649 Prisner."

III. The Change of Masters

But to return to Oxford. The University had to bear its share in the troubles and sorrows which follow in the wake of war; not that its buildings had suffered to any

extent, for among the Puritan leaders were many Oxford men, whose love for their alma mater compelled them to extend to her the protection of their influence. Sir John Eliot, John Hampden, John Pym, John Selden, and Robert Blake were all Oxford men, and Selden one of its benefactors, while Fairfax was particularly careful that no harm should come to the Bodleian. But the colleges were depleted of their students, and those who remained were completely demoralized by the war.

In 1647 twenty-four " visitors " were appointed by the parliament to visit the University, and to test the loyalty of the students towards the Puritan cause. Their reception by the University authorities was anything but cordial. It was arranged that a conference should be held in the Convocation House at 11 o'clock, but the preliminary sermon was so inordinately long, that when the visitors appeared upon the scene the appointed time was passed, and the Vice-Chancellor with his retinue was filing out through the Proscholium. " Good morrow, gentlemen," said he, " 'tis past eleven of the clock," and pursued his way without taking further notice of them.

But the day of reckoning could not be staved off for ever. Early in 1648 the members of each college were called upon to appear in person before the visitors. To each man was put the question : " Do you submit to the authority of Parliament in this present visitation ? " Many were the evasive replies that were given, but nothing would do but a plain answer to a plain question. All else but " I do submit " was considered a refusal, and those who objected to give it were expelled. Thus the Royalist partisans in the University passed out into retirement to wait until the wheel of fortune turned in their favour again. However much they may have prided themselves on the value of their services, there were still men on the other side who could fill their places with equal merit. Dr. Wilkins, the brother-in-law of Cromwell, was appointed Warden of Wadham in 1648, and was so highly esteemed by both parties that he continued to hold office under Charles II until he was subsequently made Bishop of Chester. He it was who originated at

Oxford the now famous " Royal Society ", whose degree of F.R.S. is such a coveted distinction. A noted philosopher and mathematician himself he attracted to his lodgings at Wadham many of the most conspicuous scholars of the day, including Dr. Seth Ward, the famous mathematician, Robert Boyle, the chemist, and that " prodigious young scholar, Mr. Christopher Wren ".

Altogether there were three separate Boards of Visitors, the first sitting from 1647 to 1652, the second from 1652 to 1654, while the third gradually discontinued its sittings as the University returned to its normal condition. On May 17, 1649, the Lord-General Fairfax and Lieutenant-General Cromwell visited Oxford to inspect the progress of the reforms. They were lodged at All Souls College, and were diverted with such entertainments as their Puritan principles would allow, far different, indeed, from the theatrical performances and masques with which the king had whiled away his weary hours. At Convocation they were honoured with the degree of D.C.L., a distinction which the University reserves for the most illustrious men of the time, and in return pledged themselves to foster its interests. As Cromwell, speaking for them both, said, " The General and himself knew that no Commonwealth could flourish without learning ; whatever the world said to the contrary they meant to encourage it, and were so far from subtracting any of its means that they proposed to add more." The next year he became Chancellor, an office which he continued to hold till 1657, during which time he did much to redeem his promise.

In 1658, on the anniversary of his " Crowning Mercy ", he died, and Royalist Oxford, which for the last twelve years had been more or less patiently submitting to the yoke of the Puritans, began to look forward to coming into its own again. The delight of the younger generation showed itself in a boisterous manner, for Wood tells us that " when Richard Cromwell, his son, was proclaimed before St. Marie's Church door, the usual place where the kings have been proclaimed, the mayor, recorder, town clerk, &c., accompanied by Colonel Unton Croke and his troopers, were pelted with carrot and turnip

tops by young scholars, and others who stood at a distance."

But Richard had no desire for the autocratic position which his father held. He had little taste for affairs of state, and less for soldiering, and when the army tried to domineer he quietly resigned the Protectorship and retired into country life. It was now decided to call together the remnant of the " Rump Parliament ", and on May 9, 1659, forty survivors of that much ridiculed body took their places under Speaker Lenthall. But it was all to no purpose ; the conflicting interests of the various sections of the army could not be reconciled, and in October General Lambert intercepted the Speaker on his way to open Parliament and compelled him to return home. In this indefinite state of affairs the difficulty of the situation was solved by General Monk, the commander of the army in Scotland. He put himself in communication with the exiled king and the leading Royalists at home, marched over the border, and took possession of London. Calling together the remnant of the Long Parliament, he persuaded them to issue writs for a new Parliament, and then to dissolve themselves. On May 29, 1660, Charles II entered London, to be received by the Convention Parliament, and to be assured " that so great was Mr. Lenthall's influence and weight that the restoration could not have been brought about without his concurrence ". Shortly afterwards Speaker Lenthall retired into private life, to spend the last few years of his strenuous career in the seclusion of his country home at Burford.

IV. The Restoration

During this period of waiting indications of the probable issue were not wanting in Oxford. Anthony Wood tells us that " On Feb. 13 (1660) Monday at night was great rejoicing at Oxon for the news that then was brought, that there should suddenly be a free Parliament. The bells rang and bonfires were made, and some rumps or tails of sheep were flung into a bonfire at Queen's College Gate."

A rump was also thrown through the window of Dr. Palmer, the Warden of All Souls, as he lay ill. "He had been," says Wood, "a great rumper, and a favourite of Oliver."

Oxford, like many another place, ran mad over the Restoration. Our chronicler tells us that "May 29, the day of restoration of King Charles II, was observed in all places in England, particularly at Oxon, which did exceed any place of its bigness. The jollity of the day continued till next morning. The world of England was perfectly mad." So too the next year. "The Coronation was kept at Oxon with solemnity. The conduit (Carfax) ran near upon a hogshead of claret." Once again the pendulum was to swing in favour of the Royalists; instead of "Visitors", this time the University was to receive a Royal Commission, to go round to the colleges and tender the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. Those who took the oaths retained their places, while those who still remained loyal to the principles of the Commonwealth were expelled.

The first reference to the new king's presence in Oxfordshire occurs in the Burgesses' Book at Burford. It runs as follows :—

1663.	Paid for three saddles which were presented to His Majesty King Charles the 2nd and His Highness the Duke of York . .	£21	0	0
	Paid His Majesty's Footmen . . .	10	0	
	Paid for cleansing the street when his Majesty came through the town . .	2	0	

Although thus early Charles received proof of the loyalty of the men of Burford, he does not appear to have visited Oxford till two years later. Then an outbreak of plague at the capital drove king, court, and Parliament to the old Royalist head quarters; the king was lodged at Christ Church and the queen at Merton in the same rooms which had previously been given to Queen Henrietta Maria. The House of Lords sat in the Geometry School, and the House of Commons in Laud's Convocation House. It was during the session of this Parliament that the Five Mile Act was passed, the last of a series aimed at the non-

juring and nonconforming Puritans, and by its terms all dissenting ministers were prohibited from coming within five miles of any city under a penalty of £40.

Once again in 1681, and for the last time, Parliament came to Oxford. From the time of the Restoration the Papists had gradually been reasserting themselves, but the Parliament was still strongly anti-catholic, and was bent upon passing a bill to exclude the Duke of York, an admitted Papist, from the succession. It was with the hope of avoiding this issue, and of escaping the pressure of the excitement in London, that the Parliament was brought to Oxford. The Parliament, however, were obdurate, and were only defeated in their purpose by being dissolved after sitting for a week. "Now," said Charles, "I am King of England, and was not before." For the rest of the reign his rule was practically absolute.

During his stay at Oxford the "Merrie Monarch" extended his visit to Burford and Bibury. As we have already seen, Burford was famous for its saddles, an industry which had, no doubt, been developed by the fact that the town was a great racing centre. At Bibury, too, a pretty little village over the border on the Cirencester Road, there was the same keen interest in the sport, and it was to meet the king's convenience that the Newmarket races in the spring of 1681 were transferred there.

V. James II and the University

With the accession of James II in 1685 the sympathy of the king with the Roman Catholic Church at once led to open and aggressive action on the part of its supporters. Loyal Oxford, indeed, welcomed the new king with every sign of rejoicing. Drums and trumpets were sounded; bonfires, so dear still to the modern undergraduate, were kindled before the colleges, and five barrels of beer were provided at the Town Hall for all who wished to drink the king's health. But the loyalty of the University was soon to be put to the test. First the Master of University College openly declared for Roman Catholicism, then a

Papist was appointed to the vacant Deanery of Christ Church without protest; but when James tried to force a Roman Catholic upon the Fellows of Magdalen, as their President, he found that he had men of a different stamp to deal with.

The king's nominee was one Anthony Farmer, who had no real qualification for the post, but whose admission the Fellows opposed chiefly on the ground of his leaning to Roman Catholicism, and also because his moral character was not above suspicion. In spite of the king's mandamus they proceeded to elect their own candidate, Dr. Hough, and were consequently cited to appear before the King's Commissioners to answer for their contumacy. There they maintained their opposition to the king's choice, and as their objection to Farmer on the ground of conduct seemed reasonable they were called upon to elect another nominee of the king, Samuel Parker, Bishop of Oxford. Him also they refused to admit, claiming that the post was already filled; whereupon the king determined to pay them a visit and enforce his will in person.

Coming to Oxford by way of Banbury and Woodstock, he cited the rebellious Fellows to appear before him at Christ Church, and with hot words reprimanded them for their disobedience and ignored the petition which they presented to him. "Ye have been a stubborn and turbulent college. I have known you to be so these six and twenty years. Is this your Church of England loyalty? Go home and show yourselves good members of the Church of England. Get you gone. Know I am your king. I will be obeyed." A few weeks later a Commission supported by three troops of horse appeared at Magdalen to enforce the king's will. In spite of all protests Hough and twenty-five Fellows were expelled, and their positions filled by Roman Catholics of the king's selection.

James had won, but only to find that he had over-reached himself. The next year saw William of Orange preparing to respond to the invitation of the people, and no desperate remedies that the king could adopt were of any avail. He issued commands for Magdalen College to be settled "regu-

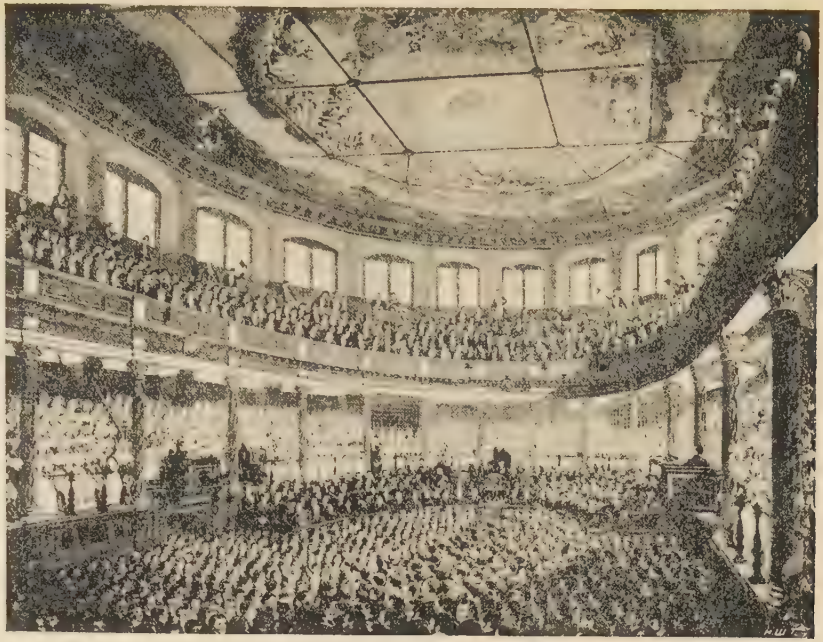
larly and statutably," and Dr. Hough and his Protestant Fellows were restored, but James's cause was irretrievably lost. Before the year closed he was an exile once more.

VI. The Dark Days of the Eighteenth Century

Of the last of the Stuart sovereigns there is little to say. William III was too much occupied with wars abroad to be able to devote much time to the inspection of his new country. In 1695 he seems, however, to have made a tour in order to conciliate by his presence some portions of the country in which he was unknown. At Burford he received the customary present of two saddles made by "the best saddler" in Europe, and graciously ordered that they should be retained for his own use. From Burford he came to Oxford, but stayed only for a few hours while he was feasted in the Sheldonian Theatre.

Queen Anne appears to have visited Oxford twice, once in 1702, with her husband, Prince George, when on her way to Bath to try the waters, and again in 1708, while passing through the city for the same purpose.

On the whole, the history of the University during the eighteenth century is as devoid of interest as the University itself was of progress and development. It was a period in which all intellectual interest seems to have died out, when examinations for a degree were little better than a sham, when positions of responsibility were conferred by favour and not by merit. It was an age of foppery and show, in which the youthful scholar aped the dress and habits of the dandies at Bath and London, an age of coffee-houses and gossip, of hard drinking and high living. Underneath it all, during the first half of the century, were the smouldering fires of political feeling, which found more active expression elsewhere in the rebellions of the "Fifteen" and "Forty-five". Oxford was intensely Jacobite, and healths were freely drunk to the "King over the water". At times, too, the disloyalty to the existing powers became more openly manifest, as when the crowd burst into riot because a recruiting party in the



THE ENCAENIA IN THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE
(*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

town attempted to celebrate the Prince of Wales's birthday. It is true the government sent down a body of dragoons to overawe the University at the time of Mar's rebellion, but as a rule the occasional outbursts of Jacobite feeling were allowed to die out in the natural course of events. It was this occupation of Oxford by the military, which occurred at about the same time as the presentation, by the Crown, of Bishop Moore's library to Cambridge, that gave rise to Dr. Trapp's famous epigram :

" The King, observing with judicious eyes
The wants of his two Universities,
To Oxford sent a troop of horse ; and why ?
That learned body wanted loyalty.
To Cambridge books he sent, as, well discerning
How much that loyal body wanted learning."

Sir Thomas Browne's reply on behalf of Cambridge was equally witty :

" The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse
For Tories own no argument but force ;
With equal care to Cambridge books he sent,
For Whigs admit no force but argument."

Still, in spite of the dark times through which the University was passing, there were a few names which added lustre to its history. An age which could produce such men as Joseph Addison, Dr. Johnson, Bishop Butler, George Whitefield, and John Wesley cannot be said to be altogether given over to indifference and neglect.

VII. A Royal Reward

Of the general history of the county during the eighteenth century, by far the most important event was the grant of the Royal Manor of Woodstock to Queen Anne's famous general in the War of the Spanish Succession. John Churchill began his military career as an ensign in the foot guards, in the reign of Charles II, and soon began to display abilities of no mean order. He

was second in command of the army sent against Monmouth, the victory at Sedgmoor being largely due to his genius. Under William III, himself a general of ability, the Earl of Marlborough, as he then was, had little opportunity to add to his distinctions, but when Queen Anne came to the throne, and war was declared against France, he was made Captain-General of the Forces at home and abroad. At the coronation of the Queen he was created Duke of Marlborough, and, two years later, in recognition of his famous victory at Blenheim, an Act of Parliament

Blenheim Palace (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

was passed bestowing upon him and his heirs for ever "The Honour and Manor of Woodstock, the Hundred of Wootton, the manors of Hordley, Wootton, Old Woodstock, Handborough, Stonesfield, Coombe, and Bladon, and also all that demolished messuage, courthouse or toft, with the appurtenances, together with the site thereof, now or formerly called Woodstock Manor House, and all that piece or parcel of ground commonly called or known by the name of Woodstock Park". The total area amounted to 2,330 acres, of which 1,793 were park or pleasure-ground. To this munificent grant was added a sum of £500,000 to build a house, and in 1705 the present palace

was commenced on a site near the old Manor House, but on the opposite side of the Glyme. The work was entrusted to the most famous architect of the day, Sir John Vanbrugh, whose designs in the classic style ultimately found expression in the massive pile of buildings as we see them to-day. But the task was far from an easy one, and serious difficulties arose between the architect and his patron before the work was concluded. Either Vanbrugh was too extravagant, or the duchess too niggardly, for of the money granted only about half was paid, and a further sum of £60,000 was subsequently voted by Parliament for the completion of the work. In 1715 the building was finished, and as it stands to-day, with its massive walls of dark Taynton stone, one cannot help calling to mind the epitaph written satirically against its architect :

> " Under this stone, reader, survey
> Dead Sir John Vanbrugh's house of clay.
> Lie heavy on him earth, for he
> Laid many a heavy load on thee."

To appreciate the splendid proportions of the building, the treasures which it contains, and the beauties of its garden and park you must visit Blenheim yourself. The grounds were laid out by a noted gardener of the time, called, from his abilities, " Capability Brown." Across the valley of the Glyme the duke built a massive bridge to bear the carriage-way from the north front of the palace over the stream, and the spectacle of its wide arch spanning the little stream below, scarcely ten feet wide, gave rise to the following epigram :

> " The minnows, as through this vast arch they pass,
> Cry, How like the whales we look, thanks to your Grace.'

But " Capability " Brown rose to the situation, and by damming up the Glyme near its exit from the park produced a magnificent sheet of water, forming one of the finest artificial lakes in the kingdom, and thus, as Dr. Johnson said, " drowned the epigram."

Facing the north front of the palace, and in the long vista of an avenue of elms, stands the column commemorative of the victories of the great duke, an account of which is carved out on the marble flanks of the pedestal. It rises to the height of a hundred and thirty feet, and is surmounted by a statue of Marlborough in Roman dress, carrying the baton of command in his left hand, and holding aloft in his right a figure of Victory. On the western side of the park, and near the Coombe gate, stands the High Lodge, the top of which commands a magnificent view of the country round. Here it was that John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and a great favourite of Charles II, died in 1680.

Early in the eighteenth century, too, was built the new house of the Harcourts at Nuneham Courtenay, which recently passed into the hands of the late Sir William Harcourt, and, at his death, to his son, Mr. Lewis Vernon Harcourt. The old manor house at Stanton Harcourt was deserted in 1688, and after gradually falling into decay was pulled down. The great kitchen and the tower known as Pope's tower were spared, however. The top room of the tower is known as the poet's study, and here, during the two summers which he spent at the manor house, he is said to have worked at his translation of Homer, leaving behind him a pane of glass in one of the windows of which was scratched with a diamond " In the year 1718 Alexander Pope finished here the fifth volume of Homer ". This interesting memento of one of England's most famous authors has since been removed, for greater security, to the house at Nuneham Park.

There are other famous houses scattered about the county, nearly all of which played their part in the stirring times of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but these you must see for yourself, remembering that their story goes to form no small part of the history of your own land.

POPE'S TOWER, STANTON HARCOURT

CHAPTER XII

INDUSTRIAL OXFORDSHIRE

I. Early Conditions of Agriculture

At the commencement of our story of Oxfordshire you will remember that we tried to picture what the county was like in those far away days before the invader set his foot upon its soil.

Now, instead of the dense mass of forest and undergrowth, are to be seen wide stretches of pasture land and cornfield, dotted here and there with orchard and with copse, with farmstead and with lordly park. Oxfordshire is an agricultural county to-day, and an agricultural county it has always been ever since our first Saxon forefathers began to cut their way into the heart of the primaeval forest. As they settled down on the territory which they acquired, they brought to it the same customs and methods of cultivation which were common in their old country. Thus it came about that the agricultural methods of the country developed upon the lines of the common or open field system. Of the circumstances which rendered the adoption of such a system expedient it is impossible to speak here, but the method of cultivation was generally somewhat as follows. The greater part of the cultivated land in a parish was divided into three great fields, of which each portion in turn remained fallow for one year. These fields were divided by broad banks of turf into strips a furlong wide, called shots, and these were further subdivided into narrower strips two or four poles wide and therefore containing half an acre or an acre. The plots were then divided among the community in accordance with a plan agreeable to all, not as permanent possessions, but in

such a way that each in turn should be required to work the less profitable land as well as the good. The course of cultivation, that is, the particular crops to be grown, and the order in which they were taken, was also settled by the common wish, and all were bound to act alike. The various farming operations were carried out by the combined efforts of all the holders, each member contributing according to his holding to provide the oxen for the common plough teams. There were, of course, many disadvantages in this primitive method of cultivating the land; the yield of the crops was extremely small and their character limited, but there was, on the other hand, the advantage that each member of the community had an interest in the land, and was free from the temptation to migrate to other parts.

II. The Enclosures

Such a system of cultivation, then, largely prevailed in our own county for centuries; not, of course, that every portion of the land was cultivated in this way, but wide stretches of country so tilled were to be found all over the county till the beginning of the nineteenth century. It must be borne in mind, too, that the lords of the manors had private or demesne lands, which they cultivated for their own benefit, and other estates which they appropriated and enclosed often with very little just claim.

As early as the fourteenth century much of the common land had become unproductive from the frequent cropping of corn, and from other defects of the system, and consequently had been converted into pasture. But it was the last half of the eighteenth century that saw the final extinction of the old system. During the first forty years of the reign of George III no less than sixty-seven Acts of Parliament were secured for enclosing land within the county. Commissioners were appointed, whose duty it was to apportion the common land among those cultivators who had a share in it, while the Act gave to

them the right of farming their own portion in any way that seemed expedient to them. While this was a great advantage to the wealthier shareholders, it pressed hardly on the poor, who were either too improvident, or not sufficiently well off, to fence in their enclosures. As a consequence many of them sold their rights for ridiculously small sums, and thus disposing of their birthright henceforth became the servants of those who were ready to hire them.

Among the last portions of the county to be enclosed was the swampy and undrained district of the Otmoor, upon which the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages of Charlton, Fencott, Murcott, Oddington, Noke, Horton, and Beckley had enjoyed rights of pasturage. Stimulated, it is said, by the Earl of Abingdon, who was lord of the manor, the villagers strongly opposed the Otmoor Inclosure Award which was granted in 1829, and showed their resentment by tearing down the fences and otherwise acting in a hostile manner. So serious was the riot in the following year that the military had to be called out to protect property and to quell the disturbance. Many prisoners were taken and lodged in the county gaol, but a batch who were being conducted through St. Giles's Fair on September 6 so excited the sympathy of the populace that the crowd overpowered the escort and set the prisoners free. Trial after trial followed in quick succession, and it was several years before the district settled down in peaceful submission to the new arrangements.

III. The Rise and Development of the Wool Trade

But while " mother earth " is the direct provider of all our sustenance there are other industries which we must mention. During the reigns of the Edwards enterprising men were beginning to find out that the swelling uplands of the Downs and the Cotswolds, while unsuitable for cultivation, were yet capable of yielding succulent pasturage for thousands of sheep, and they were not slow to avail themselves of the opportunity. Thus there

sprang up the woollen industry, which was soon to become an active competitor with the farming interest. But while wool of excellent quality could easily be raised, there was no artisan portion of the community with the requisite technical knowledge in spinning and weaving to convert it into cloth, and as a consequence the great bulk of it was exported to Flanders. The exportation of this valuable product meant a considerable addition to the revenue of the country, and to secure the effective collection of the duty certain towns called "staple" towns were selected, through which alone the wool could be distributed to the Flemish merchants who wished to buy. In 1343 Bruges enjoyed the privilege, but ten years later Edward III transferred the staple to England, and shared its privileges among some ten coast towns from Newcastle to Bristol. From 1362 to 1558, however, the staple for English wool was fixed almost constantly at Calais, and to be a merchant of the staple was an indication of wealth and influence.

Of the vast quantities of wool exported, that produced from the sheep reared on the Cotswolds and the eastern borders of Oxfordshire held a high reputation, and many an enterprising sheep-farmer rose to fortune as a merchant of the staple.

Some of the monuments of these great traders still remain to remind us of their past renown. On the wall of the north aisle of Deddington Church is a brass, partially broken, recording the death in 1533 of William Byllyng, a notable wool merchant in his day.

In the north transept of Thame Church is the altar tomb of Geoffrey Dormer, merchant of the staple at Calais, who had large warehouses in the town, and a mansion which has long since been demolished, but the site of which is well known. What dealings, one wonders, had Geoffrey Dormer with the wool-farming monks of the great Cistercian abbey close by?

Then again, Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, whom Sir Walter Scott, by the licence of romance, represents in his *Woodstock* as living in the time of the Commonwealth, was a great sheep rearer in Elizabeth's reign. With the

hill-sides and pastures dotted with thousands of sheep it is not difficult to imagine the busy life when sheep shearing came round, the long lines of pack-horses laden with wool consigned to the merchants of the staple in the thriving market towns, or the sampling and packing in the big warehouses before its shipment to the continent.

It was Edward III who first took practical measures to secure the manufacture of woollen cloth at home. He encouraged the settlement of thrifty and skilful Flemish artisans in our own country in order that his people might learn the art of spinning and weaving the natural wool.

IV. Witney and the Blanket Trade

Many of these foreigners settled in the valley of the Stroud Water where the woollen manufacture flourished for many centuries, and it is quite likely that, at the same time, some of them found their way to our own Witney. However that may be, it was in 1710 that a charter was granted constituting the Witney Blanket Company, and giving them power to make by-laws regulating the trade within a radius of twenty miles of the town. In 1721 the Blanket Hall was built, to which all manufacturers were required to bring their blankets to be weighed and marked, and not only so, but each article was required to be made of a specified weight. The rules by which the trade was controlled are exceedingly interesting, but too many to discuss in detail; among other things they regulated the engagement of apprentices, and required every master with unoccupied looms to give employment to any journeyman who might apply. The Witney Blanket Company served its purpose till 1847, when the competition of cheaper articles from the north rendered it impossible to maintain the restrictions of its rules. The chief memorial of this ancient corporation consists in the Blanket Hall, which, although no longer required for its original purpose, has recently been restored and refitted and devoted to other purposes. Over its portals

may still be seen the Blanket Weavers' Arms, with their motto, "Weave truth with trust."

Although the trade has been subject to various vicissitudes, the unmistakable quality of the articles produced has earned for Witney blankets a world-wide reputation. There are now some three hundred and fifty looms finding employment for about eight hundred hands, all of whom are in the service of four well-known firms. Before

The Blanket Hall, Witney (*Photo H. W. Taunt*)

the introduction of machinery the operations of carding and spinning the wool were carried on to a large extent by cottagers in neighbouring villages, the men and boys doing the carding and the women the spinning, the household thus making an acceptable addition to its otherwise scanty income. Now, of course, all the operations are carried on in well-appointed mills, and the manufacturer no longer goes his rounds to the villages distributing wool and oil and bringing back the yarn.

V. Local Industries

The employment of cottage labour still lingers to the profit of the rural population in the villages in the neighbourhood of Woodstock and Wychwood Forest; in many a flower-decked garden in summer time may be seen girls and women busily stitching away at the hand-sewn gloves for which Woodstock has long been famous. Royal visitors to the ancient manor were rarely allowed to depart without being presented with a richly embroidered pair as a memento of the loyalty of their faithful subjects in the borough. It is not unlikely that the gloving industry owed its origin to the deer roaming within the adjacent forests whose skins provided the necessary material; now, however, the long lines of skins which may be seen bleaching in the open air are mostly obtained from specially prepared sheepskins.

Another industry peculiar to Woodstock in the eighteenth century was the manufacture of polished steel articles from old horse-shoe nails. A steel chain of two ounces in weight is said to have been sold for £170, while a Garter Star for one of the Dukes of Marlborough cost £50. It is needless to say that modern machinery has long since put an end to this interesting mechanical art.

Our local historian, Dr. Plot, has saved from oblivion the memory of other industries which have suffered the same fate. Bampton was at one time famous for the sale of gloves, leggings, and jerkins of sheepskins dressed with the wool on them; Fritwell and Baldon grew flax, more perhaps for the value of the seed as food for cattle than for the linen made from it; Burford, as we have already seen, made splendid saddles. Henley was famous for its corn-markets and malting-kilns, and had some reputation for the manufacture of glass; chair-making in the neighbourhood of the Chiltern beech-woods still survives, although the industry now centres about High Wycombe outside the county; bells were made at Chacomb, near Banbury, in the early part of the seven-

teenth century, and the name of Henry Bagley is still to be seen in the inscription on many a bell in the Oxfordshire church towers. No pottery is now made at Marsh Baldon or Nuneham, and no longer does the white clay of Shotover Hill yield the tobacco pipes so much in demand among the soldiers in the Civil War. Still there are some industries which, like blanket-making at Witney, have defied the passage of time. Excellent paper is still made at Wolvercote Mill as it was two hundred years ago; Chipping Norton tweeds maintain a well-deserved reputation, although there is only one factory in the town. Banbury, with the pushful enterprise of a Midland town, has tried many things; the growing of rhubarb in large quantities for medicinal purposes has become a thing of the past, but the manufacture of plush is still successfully carried on at Shutford in the neighbourhood, where material is produced which can compete with any in the market. The great foundry established by Sir Bernard Samuelson for the manufacture of agricultural implements employs some three hundred hands, although at one time the number was far greater. There is also a large factory for the manufacture of underclothing which gives employment to about three hundred and forty women; but the most recent enterprise is the newly developed industry for the manufacture of boxes, employing between five and six hundred hands.

Of mineral wealth Oxfordshire has little to boast, but the extensive ironstone quarries in the neighbourhood of Hook Norton have been worked within the last few years, and furnish an ore from which the metal can be profitably extracted.

VI. The Days of the Stage Coach

Now we must turn our attention to developments which have occurred within the last century and a half, and which have played no small part in transforming the county into Oxfordshire as we know it; and first

of all, let us look at the rise and decline of the stage coach. It was the Romans who, as we have seen, first constructed roads on scientific principles, foreseeing that civilization could only advance in safety along the lines of well-constructed highways. Their successors in the occupation of the country were far less careful to carry on the excellent work which they had initiated, but placed the obligation of keeping the roads in repair largely upon the religious houses sprinkled over the country. It is to the credit of these institutions that the obligation was on the whole faithfully discharged, the duty of maintaining roads and bridges being taught by them as acceptable to Heaven and the Church. But with the dissolution of the monasteries the roads fell into a terrible state of disrepair, and travelling in vehicles was only accomplished with danger to life and limb. Even so late as the beginning of the nineteenth century we are told that Bampton was practically isolated from the outside world so far as roads were concerned. There was no stoned road leading from it to the neighbouring towns and villages, and travellers were in the habit of striking across the common by which it was surrounded, to find their way as best they could to Burford, Witney, Oxford, or any other place. Under such circumstances it can be well understood that, not only was progress slow, but vehicles were necessarily cumbersome and strongly built. For the conveyance of merchandise heavy stage wagons, broad-wheeled, springless, and drawn by large teams of horses, moved slowly from place to place, affording occasional opportunities to passengers who were prepared to tolerate the jolting and the delay. Towards the latter half of the seventeenth century the idea of stage coaches began to take a grip upon the public mind, and in 1667 Anthony Wood records a journey which he took from Oxford to London, covering the distance in two days and staying overnight at Beaconsfield. By 1671 things were a little better, for an advertisement states that "every day in the week there will be a coach set out (at six o'clock in the morning) from Thomas Moor's house over against All Souls College,

which shall commodiously perform the whole journey to London in one day, and from the Saracen's Head on Snow-Hill, London, to Oxford again the next day, and so constantly for this summer half-year. *If God permit.*"

So far as Oxford was concerned the running of these "flying" coaches was subject to the permission of the Vice-Chancellor, although some hardy proprietors ventured to defy authority even at the risk of imprisonment. For the next hundred years the deplorable state of the roads prevented any improvement in comfort or speed, but in 1763 public opinion had reached the stage of passing the Turnpike Act, by which tolls could be levied for the repair of the highways. That being an accomplished fact, reforms in speed and service followed in quick succession. In 1784, a Mr. Palmer, of Bath, induced the Prime Minister to accept a scheme propounded by him, by which mail coaches could be run to time and the guard furnished with arms to protect his charge. Thus, what the convenience of the public was unable to secure, the safe delivery of His Majesty's mails readily accomplished. And now began in earnest the era of the stage coach. In 1795 the first stage coach began to run between Bicester and London, and by 1829 there were 342 miles of turnpike road in the county rapidly being utilized for the quick conveyance of passengers and mails. Now let us look at the main coach roads which traversed the county. The road from London to Birmingham enters the county from Aylesbury near to Blackthorn, and passing through Bicester, Aynho, Adderbury, and Banbury crosses the northern boundary of the county on its way to Warwick. Two roads lead from London to Oxford, the shorter by High Wycombe, Tetsworth and Headington, the longer by Henley, Nettlebed, Benson, and Dorchester. In the earlier coaching days the high road from Wheatley ran over Shotover Common and into the city by Cheney Lane until the easier gradients by way of Headington were utilized for the new road. At Dorchester there branched off from the London road, the route to Cirencester by way of Abingdon, Faringdon, and Lechlade. From Oxford the

London road was continued westward through Witney to Cheltenham and Gloucester, and again by way of Woodstock, Enstone, and Chipping Norton to Evesham and Worcester, or by Shipston-on-Stour to Birmingham. And lastly, there was the new road from Oxford to Deddington and Banbury, thus opening up a more direct route to Warwick and Birmingham.

In addition there were numerous cross roads leading from Oxford all over the country. Through Weston-on-the-Green the road from Oxford runs on to Northampton, or by way of Bicester to Buckingham and Bedford ; from Bicester, again, the coach road crossed the county by way of Lower Heyford to Enstone, thus joining up the eastern and western routes. Another road joined Banbury, Bloxham, and Chipping Norton in the north to Burford and Lechlade in the south.

A hundred years ago these roads were teeming with busy life ; now they are strangely deserted, as also are the commodious, many-roomed hostelries, still to be seen at any twelve-mile stage out of Oxford ; such as the White Hart or the Castle at Benson, the Swan at Tetsworth, or the Litchfield Arms at Enstone.

VII. The Oxford Canal

Alongside with the development of the stage coach, there was also coming into public use another method of conveyance ; less swift it is true, but also less costly. In 1769 the Oxford Canal was projected with the idea of connecting the Thames and the southern waterways with the various canal systems in the Midlands. By 1778 the canal was opened as far as Banbury, by 1780 to Heyford, and by 1790 finished throughout its whole length, thus completing water communication between London and Birmingham. It commences in a junction with the Coventry Canal near that town, and thence takes a south-easterly course to Braunston in Warwickshire. Here it is connected with the Grand Junction Canal and then passes southward to Napton, where

there is a branch to Warwick. Continuing southward, it enters our county near Claydon, and, passing through Banbury, crosses the Cherwell to its eastern side near King's Sutton. From thence it continues to follow the course of the Cherwell valley and, at some little distance south of Enslow Bridge, merges with the river and makes use of its channel almost as far as Shipton. There it leaves the Cherwell on its westward side, and, crossing into the Thames valley, takes a direct course to Oxford, where it enters the Thames near Tumbling Bay, the bathing place so familiar to many generations of Oxford boys. There is, however, one other connexion with the Thames which strikes off westward near Wolvercote signal box, and, entering the mill stream, provides communication with Eynsham and the upper river.

Originally ninety-one miles in length, it was later shortened to seventy-seven miles, of which forty are in Oxfordshire. The difference in gradient is dealt with by forty-three locks, while at convenient places along its course are wharves for the transhipment of cargo. The advantage of such a waterway is scarcely so manifest now that the competition of the railways has greatly reduced its trade, but it must be remembered that before its construction it cost a great deal to bring coal from the great midland coalfields. Coal was "sea-coal" in those days, carried by ships to the sea-ports, and if distributed inland at all, only by the costly method of horse traction. Consequently wood fires were the rule, and many were the privations that poor folk had to endure during the rigour of winter. Previous to 1780 we are told that "the people at Heyford were greatly distressed for firing, wood being scarce; they were obliged to burn straw or anything they could procure". But with the advent of the canal "they were as well supplied with coals as any village in Oxfordshire". During the great frost of 1795 the canal was closed for ten weeks, and coals were brought by land carriage from Birmingham to Oxford to be sold at four shillings a hundredweight. There can be no doubt that in its early days the canal was a great boon: the character

of the goods carried was much more varied than it is now, a market boat plying between Oxford and Banbury every week collecting farm produce on its way. Now, however, the quicker transit of the railway train has greatly reduced its trade, the materials carried being such as permit of a longer time in delivery, hay, salt, pottery, coal, and the Hart's Hill stone with which our roads are paved.

VIII. Railways

It was the arrival of the railway train which brought to the canals that check in their prosperity from which they are never likely to recover in spite of the many obvious advantages which they still possess. An age of increasing business activity demands the rapid transmission of commodities, and this condition the canals can never comply with, although, on the other hand, they are able to offer considerably lower rates of carriage. In 1829 the labours of James Watt and George Stephenson had culminated in the opening of the first railway in England between Liverpool and Manchester. Slowly and surely, and in spite of strenuous opposition from coach owners and landed proprietors, the possibilities of steam locomotion began to dawn on the public mind. In 1834 some enterprising Bristol merchants presented a bill to Parliament for the construction of a railway between the western port and the capital, but, mainly through the opposition of the college authorities at Eton and Oxford, the bill, which had cost £30,000, was lost. Notwithstanding this check, another bill was presented in the following year with considerable modifications, and to its acceptance by Parliament was due the beginning of the Great Western Railway.

From 1835 the enterprise was rapidly pushed on, and, under the skilled direction of Isambard Brunel, the whole line from London to Bristol was opened in 1841. In 1844 the Didcot branch had reached Oxford, where a station was opened on the low-lying fields in Grandpont

at the end of Western Road, to be transferred later on to a more convenient site at Osney. By 1852, the line had been carried to Banbury, and in the same year the branch line which turns off at Yarnton for Charlbury and Worcester was opened. In 1850 the London and North Western Company opened up communication between Bletchley and Banbury, and in the following year placed Oxford in connection with their system by carrying the Bletchley line from Verney Junction through Bicester and Islip to the capital of the county. Then came in succession three single-line branch railways in connexion with the Great Western: the Abingdon section in 1856, the Witney and Fairford line in 1861, and, in 1863, the branch from Oxford through Littlemore, Thame, and High Wycombe to the main line again at Maidenhead. Further, in 1872, Watlington was placed in connexion with this last section by its branch to Princes Risborough. In 1887 the Great Western line between Banbury and Cheltenham by way of King's Sutton and Chipping Norton was opened, and, last of all, the little line between Kidlington and Woodstock in 1890.

Thus far the provision of railway accommodation had been entirely in the hands of the two companies already named, but in 1899 a new competitor, the Great Central Railway, came into the field. Previous to that time the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, as it was then called, had long been desirous of extending their operations to London, and in 1893, after much opposition, they were successful in securing a bill which granted the much-desired permission. Thereupon they set to work to construct their new line from Sheffield by way of Nottingham, Leicester, Rugby, and Brackley to Quainton Road Junction where the Metropolitan line, which they had also acquired, gave them direct access to Marylebone Station. Shortly afterwards a joint line was constructed between the Great Central Railway at Woodford and the Great Western line at Banbury, which not only gave the former line the opportunity of running trains to the south coast towns, but also placed Oxford in much more convenient connexion with the big towns in Lancashire

and Yorkshire. Whereas formerly, the Great Western line served only as far as Birkenhead, and the London and North Western could only be used to advantage after a slow and tedious journey to Bletchley, now the Great Central fast trains give to Oxford quick communication with Sheffield and the big towns beyond.

The latest development of railway enterprise in the county is at present in course of construction. With keener competition it becomes expedient for rival lines to endeavour to accomplish the run of their fast trains between the large towns in the least possible time, an end to be attained either by increasing the speed or by shortening the distance. Under present conditions it seems unlikely that engines will be able to travel more quickly with a due regard for safety; improvement therefore lies in making the route as direct as possible. With this end in view the Great Western Company are now constructing a new line across the north-eastern side of the county to connect the Princes Risborough line with that from Oxford to Birmingham. When it is completed, trains will be able to run from Paddington by way of Uxbridge, High Wycombe, Princes Risborough, and Bicester to the junction north of Aynho, and thence by way of Banbury to Birmingham, thus obviating the more indirect route through Oxford, and accomplishing an appreciable saving in time.

In spite of modern improvements, Oxfordshire is none too well supplied with railway facilities; Burford lies four miles from the nearest station, while Watlington and Henley can only be reached from Oxford by roundabout routes. With the exception of the Watlington line, the country between the Chilterns and Oxford is altogether unserved, and a journey from the outlying districts to the capital of the county often takes longer than a run to London. For many country villages the carrier's cart is still the only means of getting to market, except for those who are ardent and persevering cyclists.

CHAPTER XIII

THE OXFORDSHIRE REGIMENTS

I. The Militia

To discuss in due order the story of the military associations of the county it will be necessary to go back to a time when the country had no standing army, and when the responsibility of defending it in case of attack rested upon the people themselves. As a matter of fact, the insular position of our land and its freedom from attack from without, rendered it possible for the country to do without a standing army long after continental countries had adopted such a force. Of course, an army had been available from earliest times, even as far back as the Norman Conquest, but it was one called up for special service, and disbanded as soon as the emergency was passed. In later years, at any rate, it was styled the Militia, a name which merely means a body of fighting men.

For service in their wars abroad the earlier kings were accustomed to hire soldiers, and also to issue writs throughout the country directing the various towns to supply a stated number of men.

According to the Act of Parliament for making the Lists and the Ballots and Enrolments for the Militia of the United Kingdom, the method of enrolling the militia was generally as follows. The Secretary of State declared the number of militiamen required from each county, and directed the lord-lieutenant to cause meetings to be held in each subdivision for the purpose of drawing up lists of all available men. Each parish was required to make a return of all males between the ages of eighteen and thirty, from whom the requisite number might be selected. In the first instance, volunteers were called for, and if that method sufficed to fill the list no further steps were taken. If not,

however, then double the deficiency was balloted for, since a selected man might be able to claim exemption or plead a reasonable excuse. Being selected by the ballot, a man must come out for duty unless he were sufficiently fortunate to be able to purchase the services of a substitute to take his place.

The records of the Oxfordshire Militia in its early years are very fragmentary. Thus in 1685, during the time of Monmouth's rebellion, it was called out, under the Earl of Abingdon as lord-lieutenant, for service in the county, although it did not actually take the field against the rebels. From that time till 1756 its history drops into oblivion, but when the Seven Years' War was about to commence, the fear of a French invasion called it into existence again, and it was once more organized under the sanction of an Act of Parliament. But it was in 1778 that the militia took the form which it was to maintain for nearly a century. In that year the royal warrant was issued to the Duke of Marlborough to muster the militia and place it under properly commissioned officers. Five hundred and sixty men were required in the first instance, for service in the county only, but elsewhere also if any imminent danger should threaten, and the returns show that 538 effectives and twenty-two non-effectives were enrolled. In 1783, after five years of service, they were disembodied, having been quartered successively at Reading, Newbury, and Dover. Six years later the French Revolution began, when the fear of revolt at home and of invasion from abroad necessitated the embodiment of the militia once more. From 1792 till the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 the Oxfordshire men saw continual service ; in 1793 they were occupied in escorting 1,000 French prisoners from Southampton to Salisbury, and in 1794 they were marched to the Downs near Brighton, where 10,000 men altogether were in camp.

It was in this year that the most momentous event of their history occurred, an event unhappily discreditable to a regiment bearing the name of the "*Royal* Oxfordshire Militia". You must remember that these were times of terrible scarcity and privation, when prices were so

high that the meagre pay of the soldier made it impossible for him to live in decent comfort. Meat, flour, and bread were at exorbitant prices, and, to make matters worse, the soldiers were expected to use a portion of their precious flour in dressing the "pigtail" which formed so conspicuous a part of their equipment. Such a regulation was extremely unpopular, and was often evaded by using soap and other ingredients instead of the flour which they could ill afford to spare.

The Oxfordshire Militia were encamped at East Blatchington, near Newhaven, when discontent broke out into open rioting; bakers' shops were stormed, flour mills ransacked, butchers' stalls cleared, and the spoil distributed to the mob. Further, a cargo of flour worth £5,000 was seized and carried off to Lewes market to be sold "at a fair price." After these exploits the rioters encamped near Newhaven for the night, but were surrounded by the Lancashire Fencibles, whom the authorities had sent to secure their arrest. And now rioting turned to mutiny, for the comrades of the Oxfordshire men broke barracks, and, in their attempt to effect a rescue, boldly attacked a troop of horse artillery, and were not dispersed till blood was shed on both sides. The inevitable court-martial followed, and severe sentences were passed on the ringleaders. Edward Cooke of Witney and Henry Parish of Chipping Norton were sentenced to death, while six others were to receive floggings varying from 500 to 1,500 stripes. As a matter of fact, none of these men received more than 300 stripes, but the death sentences were duly carried out. On the fatal morning the rebellious regiment was placed in two parts, on opposite slopes of a valley, together with the other regiments in the camp, while cavalry and horse artillery, prepared for any emergency, were stationed under arms on the crest of the hills. Down in the valley below the condemned men knelt upon their coffins and submitted to their fate at the hand of a firing party made up of comrades who had taken part in their crime. From the Royal Oxfordshire Militia the regiment was degraded to the Oxfordshire Militia, and, worse still, they became the ridicule of their comrades, and for many a long day

their regiment was known as "The Big Loaf Oxford". Their foolish conduct, however, was not without some good effects, for the mutiny ultimately led to inquiries which resulted in an advance in the standard of pay for all branches of the service.

The subsequent history of the regiment proves that, although overtaken in a fault, they were at heart brave and loyal soldiers, and could do effective service in the field; in 1798 they were engaged in suppressing the rebellion in Ireland, where their discipline and zeal did much to redeem the past. Then followed, in 1803, the great French scare, when Napoleon boasted that fifteen millions of people must give way to forty millions. Recruiting was carried on with renewed vigour, and few men upon whom the lot fell were able to escape service; while, in 1803, a substitute could be had for £10, by 1807 the price had doubled. Still further, in order to keep up a full complement of men, a new militia regiment was called up at home to take the place of the old one when away on active service. It was the anticipated landing of Napoleon in the south of the country that gave England the greatest concern, and from 1805 onward we find the regiment stationed successively at Colchester, Taunton, Littlehampton, the Tower, Bristol, Cork, and Portsmouth. At length, in 1815, the glorious victory at Waterloo shattered the power of the enemy, and the Oxfordshire regiment was disembodied after more than twenty years of continuous service.

Trainings were intermittent till 1831, and then the whole of the militia regiments throughout the kingdom were suspended till 1852, in which year they were revived on an entirely new footing. Instead of selection by ballot, enlistment was to be voluntary, and each recruit received a bounty of ten shillings on joining the ranks. In 1852, for the first time, the annual training took place at Woodstock, the soldiers being billeted in the towns and the neighbouring villages, and not placed under canvas, as is customary now. By this time the need of a fixed head quarters was keenly felt, and, consequently, in 1855, the building at the foot of the Castle Mound, now

used by the County Police, was completed and used as an armoury. Meanwhile the Crimean War had begun, and the Oxfordshire Militia, having volunteered for foreign service, were occupied in garrison duty in the island of Corfu during 1855–6. For that service they received their greatest distinction, and were permitted to inscribe the word " Mediterranean " on their colours. For the next ten years the annual trainings were carried out at Oxford, but in 1867 the regiment went to Aldershot for the first time, and 1869 saw the last training carried out in billets. By 1873 the Brigade Depôt system had been introduced, one of the first results of which was the erection of Cowley Barracks. The buildings were completed in 1876, and at the conclusion of their training in that year the regiment marched their arms to the new head quarters for the first time. With the reorganization of the army in 1881, the Oxfordshire Militia, as such, ceased to exist, and henceforth become known as the 4th Battalion of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

II. The 43rd and the 52nd

We must now turn our attention to the regular regiments which have become associated with the name of Oxfordshire, the Regiments of the Line as they were originally called. In the early years of the reign of Charles II, the question of the defence of the country was considered by Parliament, and it was ultimately determined that the command of the militia and the fortresses should be restored to the king, while a further regular force of two regiments, and several garrisons, amounting in all to 5,000 men, should be raised in the country. This was the beginning of our standing army. With the reorganization of the army in 1881, the old Line designations were abolished, and the regiments received their present territorial names. Previously, in 1873, Oxford had become the head quarters for the 42nd District, including Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, to which the old 52nd and 85th Regiments of the Line were attached. But the 52nd had always been closely associated in the field with the

43rd, and to continue this comradeship, maintained in many a hard-fought field, the 43rd were substituted for the 85th in 1881.

By a General Order dated May 1, 1881, the Infantry of the Line and the Militia were organized into territorial regiments, and four battalions were associated to form the Oxfordshire Light Infantry. The old 43rd Light Infantry became the first battalion, and the 52nd the second; the King's Own Royal Bucks Militia the third, and the Oxfordshire Militia the fourth. A little later the district was renumbered in order to follow the rule of making the numbers of all regimental districts agree with the old number of the first line battalion, and consequently Oxon. and Bucks now constitute the 43rd Regimental District, with Cowley Barracks as the head quarters of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

The early history of the regular battalions is therefore that of the 43rd and 52nd Regiments of the Line, whose record of service it may be said at the outset is not to be beaten by that of any other line regiment in the British Army. The 43rd, originally the Monmouthshire Regiment, was raised in 1741, while the 52nd, always associated with Oxfordshire, was first enrolled in 1755, when eleven regiments of the line were added to the army. The renowned brotherhood of these two regiments commenced in 1775, when they fought side by side at the battle of Bunker's Hill at the beginning of the American War of Independence. The opening years of the last century were an anxious time for England, threatened, as it was, with an invasion by Napoleon across the Channel; and 1804 saw the 43rd and 52nd brigaded together with the 95th at Shorncliffe, under Sir John Moore, for the defence of our southern shores. The bravery of Nelson, however, and his glorious victory at Trafalgar, entirely defeated Napoleon's plans, and 1807 saw our two regiments fighting under Sir Arthur Wellesley at Copenhagen. In 1808 the Peninsular War began, and the 43rd and 52nd were among the first regiments to be sent to Portugal.

At Vimiera the 43rd were in the forefront of the action, winning for themselves fresh laurels by the bravery with

which they rallied the attack and drove the enemy back in confusion. Then came the unhappy retreat to Corunna and the death of their colonel, Sir John Moore, to whose training their efficiency was largely due. After a brief return home they were sent again to the seat of war, brigaded under Major-General Sir Robert Crawfurd, with the 95th, a regiment which subsequently became the Rifle Brigade. Thus was constituted the famous "Light Brigade", which was afterwards pronounced the finest and most splendid brigade that ever took the field; "their system of light drill, of manœuvring, and of outpost duty, justly caused them to be held up as models to the British Army, and furnished an example which other regiments were not slow to adopt." And indeed their record of service in the Peninsula is one of which they have every reason to be proud.

On July 28, 1809, in the hottest season of the year, the Light Brigade started on their famous forced march to Talavera, accomplishing the whole distance of sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours, with only seventeen stragglers, although each man had to carry between fifty and sixty pounds' weight on his shoulders. At Busaco, in 1811, General Crawfurd held them in line till the enemy were within a few yards, and then shouting "Now, 52nd, avenge the death of Sir John Moore!" sent them on to victory. To one of their number, Private James Hopkins of the 52nd, fell the good fortune to capture General Simon, for which act of bravery he subsequently received a pension of £20 a year. At Redinha, such was their gallantry, that Lord Wellington requested the commanding officers to name a sergeant from each regiment to be promoted to an ensigncy, as a mark of his appreciation of their valour. Then followed engagements at Fuentes d'Onoro, and Ciudad Rodrigo in 1811, and at Badajoz and Salamanca in 1812. It was at Ciudad Rodrigo that General Crawfurd was mortally wounded, and at the siege of Badajoz that the 43rd suffered so terribly, losing twenty officers and 335 men. At Salamanca, in 1812, the Light Division was in reserve, but at Vittoria, in the following year it occupied the fighting line, and showed

splendid courage under fire. As the enemy's cannon balls knocked a file out of the ranks the men closed up, while the sergeant in the rear, calling out "Who got that?" entered the name in his list of casualties. The French were now being driven over the Pyrenees, and with the engagements at St. Sebastian, Vera, and Nivelle, the service of the Light Division in the Peninsula came to an end, well deserving the splendid testimony which Sir William Napier bore to their valour in his *History of the Peninsular War*. "They were never negligent, never dismayed. Six years of war could not detect a flaw in their system, nor were they ever matched in courage and skill. These three regiments were avowedly the best that England ever had under arms."

With 1815 came the escape of Napoleon from Elba, and the dispatch of the Duke of Wellington with an English army to Belgium. Once more the 52nd were selected for active service, but the 43rd were only just returning from America, where they had been fighting in the unfortunate engagement at New Orleans. Although dispatched to the continent immediately on their return, they only arrived at Ostend on June 17, too late to give them an opportunity of sharing in the famous victory at Waterloo. There the 52nd, with upwards of a thousand bayonets, was probably the strongest battalion in the field. From early morning till late in the afternoon the engagement had been fought on both sides with unflagging stubbornness, and at length the time had arrived when the final issue of the battle hung in the balance. At about half-past six Napoleon determined to make his last effort by sending the Imperial Guard against the thin red line. The 52nd, together with the 71st, was drawn up in line four deep on the right wing, a short distance from Hougomont. Concealed by the crest of the hill, the men waited till the dense masses of the enemy were within a hundred yards of them, and then came the command to charge. Staggered by the firing of the whole British line, the Imperial Guard wavered for a moment, and then broke back before the steady onset of the 52nd. Waterloo was won. "Go on, Colborne, go on, give them no time to rally," said the Duke,

and with a steady pressure the veteran regiment bore the enemy before them right away to La Belle Alliance. From that time nothing remained but to chase the broken and fugitive enemy as far as the waning light allowed, but it was the supreme effort of the 52nd at the critical moment which shattered Napoleon's power for ever.

For three years the two regiments remained in France, returning to England in 1818. In 1825 the 43rd were quartered at Gibraltar, and in 1837 were sent across the Atlantic to assist in suppressing the Canadian revolt. There they made another record march, covering the 370 miles to Quebec in eighteen days, during the rigour of the winter frosts. Meanwhile the 52nd had been quartered at Barbadoes, returning to England in 1842, while their comrades were sent home in 1846. Neither regiment was engaged in the Crimean War, the 43rd being in Africa during the Kaffir War of 1851–3, at the close of which they were sent to join the 52nd in India, and here, during the Mutiny, they once more saw the strife and turmoil of active service. Of the revolt at Meerut, and the capture of Delhi by the rebels, of the massacre at Cawnpore, and the heroic relief of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell, we cannot speak here ; it is with the attempts to recapture Delhi that we are mainly concerned. The town had been seized by the rebels on May 11, but it was not till June 8 that a sufficiently strong force could be organized to attempt its recapture. Even then the tremendous difficulty of the task was too great for the English generals ; Sir Henry Barnard died, General Reed, his successor, broke down, and Sir Archdale Wilson, upon whom the command devolved, found his forces weakened by sickness, and dispirited by the boldness and numbers of the enemy. It was not till August 14 that Brigadier-General Nicholson, a second Havelock, as he was called, came upon the scene with 2,500 troops, and with them, the trustiest element of all, Her Majesty's 52nd Foot. True to their reputation the 52nd had exerted themselves to the utmost, marching sixty-two miles on two intensely hot Indian days, and fighting a short but fierce battle on the way. But still the general had to wait for a siege-train

and heavy guns, and September 14 had arrived before the final assault could be made. In four columns the attacking army advanced upon the town, the 52nd leading the way to the Cashmere Gate and supporting the intrepid Lieutenant Salkeld as his explosion party of seven men placed the bags of gunpowder at the gate. When smoke and dust had cleared away the road into the town was open, but a road bristling with death and destruction. There was a moment's faltering till Bugler Hawthorne, by a happy instinct, sounded the charge, and then the 52nd rushed on to victory once more. The gate was won, but not the city; so great were the resources of the enemy, that not till six days later was the victory complete. With the fall of Delhi, however, the back of the Mutiny was broken, and slowly but surely the supremacy of England was restored.

Before the Mutiny there happened an event which went far to prove that the men of the 43rd possessed not only the physical courage which made them irresistible in battle, but also that nobler moral courage which is the mark of a true hero. On February 26, 1852, the troopship *Birkenhead* was conveying to the Cape details from various regiments, and among them a draft of forty-one men for the 43rd. The voyage was almost finished and land was in sight, when the ship struck a hidden rock off Point Danger in Simon's Bay, and, to the dismay of all, began to settle down. There were women and children on board, too, and it was soon obvious that the boats were altogether inadequate for the task of conveying all safe to land. To rush for the boats was the first instinct, but at the word of command the steady discipline of the well-trained troops asserted itself, and the men drew up in line on the fast sinking deck to watch the women and children passed into the boats. They knew there was no hope, but they stood in their ranks to the last and met their fate like brave men. To quote Sir Francis Doyle's immortal lines,

" There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought,
By shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught
To trample down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
The oars ply back again and yet again;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men."

After the Indian Mutiny it was the 43rd that next saw active service, the regiment being sent in 1864 to New Zealand for the purpose of subduing the Maoris, who keenly resented the intrusion of British settlers. After a stout resistance, these brave aborigines were ultimately subdued, and now form a peaceful, though, unhappily, a fast declining community of British subjects.

III. The Oxfordshire Light Infantry

In 1881 the 43rd and 52nd adopted their new names and became respectively the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, while at the same time the principle was adopted of keeping one battalion at home while the other served abroad. But in 1885 both battalions were abroad, the first in India, and the second with Lord Wolseley's army in Egypt, where they had to endure the disappointment of passing through the campaign without going into action. From thence the second battalion went on to India, relieving the first who were under orders to return home. During the short time previous to these changes no reinforcements were sent out to either battalion, it being the intention that the first battalion, before leaving India, should transfer to the second all men who had still a certain number of years remaining to complete their period of service. Under these circumstances 310 men were transferred, and the second battalion came home only 395 strong out of a total number of about 1,000 men required to bring it up to full strength. The deficiency, however, was partly made up by the addition of some 400 recruits who were waiting at home. Thus matters stood till 1899 when the Boer War broke out, and the hopes of every British soldier ran high that his regiment might be sent

to the seat of war. To their disappointment the Oxfordshires found themselves omitted from the First Division, not on account of any deficiency of courage but simply from lack of numbers.

Under present conditions a man serves for twelve years, seven with the colours, as a rule, and five in the reserve, after which time he is not liable to be called up for service. Now it so happened that after the battalion was made up to strength in 1887 recruiting was checked for some time, with the consequence that, twelve years later, when the war broke out, there were very few reservists liable for active service, and the battalion could only muster 361 men. However, their disappointment did not last long, for before the end of the year they were under orders to form a part of the Sixth Infantry Division. Some of you may perhaps remember the enthusiasm which the departure of the battalion evoked; the solemn ceremony of depositing the colours at the Cathedral, and the hearty God-speed of the citizens as the soldiers entrained at the station. By December 22, 660 men of all ranks had set sail from Southampton for the seat of war, arriving there at midnight on January 13. It was the good fortune of the battalion to reach their destination just before Field-Marshal Lord Roberts arrived, and they were at once associated with the army which that famous general organized to carry the war into the Orange River Free State. The story of their subsequent movements is too long to tell here; how they helped to capture General Cronje's army at the memorable battle of Paardeburg in 1900, and how later they spent many a long and weary march in chasing De Wet. In 1901 the war came to an end, and by 1902 the battalion was home once more. A simple memorial standing near the eastern end of Magdalen Bridge bears silent witness to the bravery of the men who laid down their lives in the country's service.

In 1903, after nineteen years' service abroad, the 2nd battalion returned to Old England once more, while the 1st battalion took their place in our Indian Empire. Their brilliant record of service you may see on the

colours of the regiment, now no longer carried into war, but still the treasured emblems of a glorious past. There you may read, "Quebec 1759, Mysore, Hindoostan, Vimiera, Corunna, Busaco, Fuentes D'Onor, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria, Nivelle, Nive,

South Africa, 1899–1902

Orthes, Toulouse, Peninsula, Waterloo, South Africa 1851–2–3. Delhi, New Zealand, South Africa 1900–2, Relief of Kimberley, Paardeburg." Thus in almost every part of the world the 43rd and 52nd have maintained the prestige of the British arms, and played no small part in forming the Empire of which we are so justly proud.

IV. The Volunteers and the Yeomanry

There now remain two further sections of our army to which it is necessary to refer, the Volunteers and the Yeomanry; and, first of all, let us endeavour to trace the history of that well-known and efficient body of citizen soldiers, the Volunteers. The idea of organizing civilians into trained and well-equipped regiments for home service seems to have originated with the French scare at the close of the eighteenth century.

In April, 1798, a meeting of the citizens of Oxford was held in the Town Hall for the purpose of forming an association to assist the civil power in the preservation of peace, and in the suppression of any tendency to tumult and disorder. It was thought likely that the city might be called upon to accommodate prisoners of war, or to provide an asylum for refugees from the coast towns, and under such circumstances the presence of a strong force would be necessary for the security of the town. The proposal was adopted with enthusiasm, the maximum number of recruits required was easily obtained, and thus the "Oxford Loyal Volunteers" came into existence. A committee was appointed to secure the king's sanction to the proposal, and to draw up for the control of the corps a code of rules to which each member was required to subscribe.

The loyalty of these men may perhaps be measured to some extent by the sacrifices which they were prepared to make in the fulfilment of this self-imposed duty. Drills were held every day (Sundays excepted) at six o'clock in the morning and six o'clock in the evening, and extended over a period of two hours. There was to be no shirking, for every man who was absent for a morning and evening or an evening and morning successively without a valid excuse was liable to a fine of one shilling. Similar and proportionate fines were also imposed for negligence and insubordination, while persistent refusal to submit to discipline was met by publicly denouncing the culprit as a deserter and expelling him from the regiment.

In addition to this sacrifice of time and leisure each member was called upon to provide his own uniform. This consisted of a dark blue frock coat, made to pattern, with red collar and cuffs, and decorated with gilt buttons bearing the letters O.L.V. surmounted by a crown; the waistcoat, breeches, and stockings were to be white, while the legs were further protected by black cloth half-gaiters; there was to be a black stock for the neck, and a round hat with black bearskin, cockade, and feather; last, but by no means least important, was a gilt breast-plate bearing the same device as the button.

The discipline of the regiment was soon established, and by the end of July it was efficient enough to hold a public parade on Port Meadow, when a set of colours provided by the Duke of Marlborough was presented to the corps.

Happily the Oxford Loyal Volunteers were never required to enter upon active service for the defence of their homes or the maintenance of peace within the city boundaries, but one cannot help admiring their willingness to accept the responsibility of fighting for their fatherland. Their methods may have been crude, but it was their early sacrifices at the call of duty which showed the possibility of organizing the Volunteer Army as we know it, which forms so important a part of our military system to-day. When we remember that throughout the country at that time there were no less than 347,000 such volunteers under arms, it is easy to realize the capabilities for defence of such a trained body of men. It was in 1860 that trouble in France once more rendered it expedient to enrol volunteers, and from that time the force has continued to maintain a fixed and valuable place in the national line of defence. Both the Oxford University and City Rifle Corps were established in 1860, and three years later a grand review was held on Port Meadow, when some thousands of troops from various parts were present. The grey tunics which the men wore in the early years of their enrolment were discarded for the present scarlet tunics in 1875, and with the reorganization of the army in 1881 the Rifle Corps became recognized portions of the army, the

University section becoming the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, and the City and County the 2nd Battalion.

There yet remains one other section of our army to which reference must be made, the Yeomanry. As early as 1798 volunteer cavalry regiments were being formed all over the country, and on April 20 in that year the minutes of the Oxford Loyal Volunteers contain a proposal " that as soon as this corps shall amount to 250 men any number of the members thereof not exceeding fifty shall be at liberty to form themselves into a troop of cavalry to act in concert with the corps ". By May 1 the stipulated conditions appear to have been fulfilled, and it was therefore agreed that the troop of cavalry should consist of not more than fifty and not less than forty persons. After the period of unrest to which we have referred, the yeomanry together with the volunteers seem to have been disbanded, but later on the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars were organized as a cavalry regiment and armed with sabre and carbine. As such they continued till the experiences of the Boer War proved the expediency of converting them into mounted infantry armed only with the service rifle, when they became known as the Oxfordshire Imperial Yeomanry.

More recently, by the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, both Volunteers and Yeomanry have been constituted a part of the Territorial Force, and now form the second line of defence instead of the third as formerly. The old 43rd and 52nd regiments remain the first and second battalions respectively of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, the Militia has been absorbed in the third, or special reserve battalion, while the Volunteers and the Yeomanry now form the fourth battalion.

Some day, let us hope, the time will come when war will be no more, but till then every true-hearted Briton must be ready to play the man for home and fatherland, and to fight, if need be, under the banner whose motto is

DEFENCE, NOT DEFIANCE.

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